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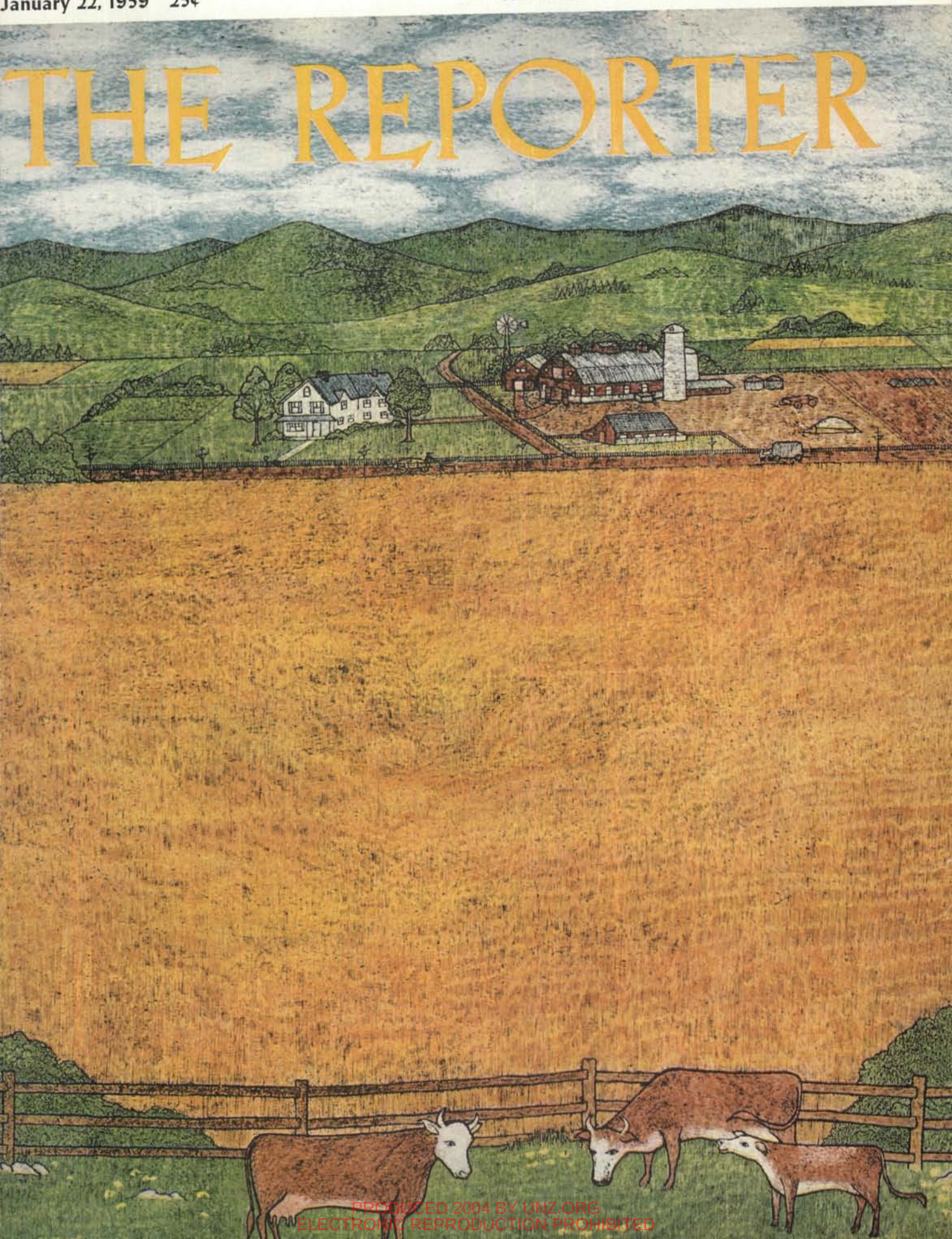

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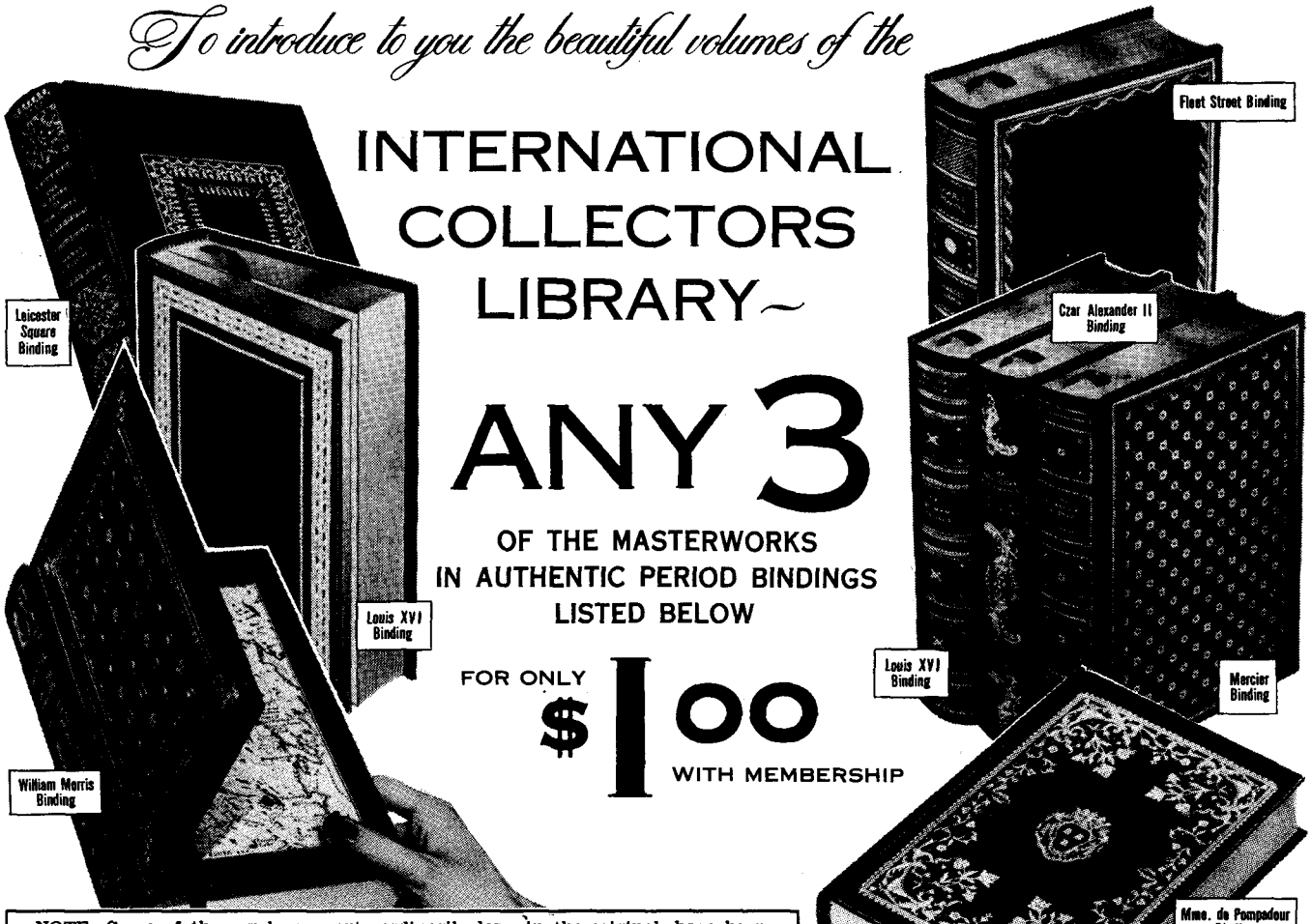

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THE REPORTER'S NOTES

After the Haircut

Our sympathies, as can be expected, are all with Fidel Castro—and with Herbert L. Matthews of the New York *Times*, who played a not inconsiderable role in making the whole world, including the Cubans, aware of the 26th of July Movement. Castro has come to power the hard way, and we are confident that he will prove to be a vast improvement over his predecessor in the leadership of the island republic. He, and his brave followers, will have a big job ahead of them to reconstruct their country, after they have settled in Havana and have enjoyed the benefit of a long-overdue shave, haircut, and shampoo.

But for us Americans, or *norte-americanos*, as we are called south of the Rio Grande, there is a great lesson to be learned. It not only concerns the behavior of our ambassadors to the sister republics, who almost invariably act as if they were cabinet members of the régime in power. The most important lesson concerns the weapons we keep on sending to the twenty republics south of our borders, and the use these republics are making of the weapons we send. Unquestionably, these governments need armies, and unquestionably these armies need arms, and it is entirely logical that we should take care of the latter need by shipping out our surplus or secondhand weapons. This is all to the good, provided guns and the like are mainly used for parade purposes and the satisfaction of national vanity. But when these weapons are actually fired, when people are shot, and in fact fall dead, then it is time for us to call a halt. The recipients of American bullets, their friends and partisans, are certainly not grateful to us for having provided the guns that fired the bullets.

The responsibility for avoiding bloodshed, putting an end to Latin-American civil wars, should be shared by our sister republics. Indeed, in the case of Cuba this responsibility was shared, but nothing came of it. So far the inter-American alliance of nations bound by the Rio treaty for mutual defense has merely contributed twenty nations to that imposing number of nearly fifty with whom, as Secretary Dulles never tires of telling us, we are bound by mutual defense agreements. But until and unless this inter-American system succeeds in bringing some minimum element of civility and welfare to the peoples concerned, we can only expect resentment and suspicion from our sister republics. For the present, we certainly would not advise Vice-President Nixon to visit Havana.

THE LUNIK GOES ROUND AND ROUND

"South African Zulus coined their own name for the Soviet cosmic rocket.... They call it Isiphuphuteki, which means 'the thing that goes round and round and never gets anywhere.'" —*New York* Times

Trust a Zulu
To coin a lulu
And cut things down to size;

Hear him mock
The cosmic rock-
et, rob it of surprise.

Trust a white
To rear in fright
At what the thing implies;

The simpler soul
Lets rockets roll,
Unshaken by surmise.

While every run
Around the sun
Shows up our missile lag,

To any Zu-
lu, Isiphu-
phuteki's just a gag!

--SEC

Mikoyan's Lost Chance

As far as ceremonial goes, all openings of Congress leave a great deal to be desired, but then it must be admitted that there is a certain unrehearsed quality about them that makes for unforeseeable snafus somewhat like theatrical performances in progressive schools.

The gallery spectators are part of the show, for most of those who are perched upstairs are there to watch their own man in the moment of his triumph. Below, the anointed ones mill around, with their incessant clapping of hands on shoulders, pumping of arms, and squeezing of palms. American politicians, apparently more than any others, feel an insatiable need to be loved, both by their peers and by those whose confidence they have humbly and proudly received.

WE FIND IT regrettable that the personable Soviet Deputy Premier, Anastas Mikoyan, passed up the chance to witness the convening of what the Senate chaplain called "the last best hope of democracy." But no matter how clever, Mikoyan is a Marxist and probably thought that the rulers of this nation ought to be found in Detroit, Cleveland, Wall Street, or wherever else men of great means congregate. As a Soviet Communist, he has no use, of course, for labor, and this too proves that the man is ill-informed and ill-advised. Certainly he should not have spent a full day in Detroit without a good long talk with Jimmy Hoffa. Maybe Mikoyan would have found him even more congenial than Henry Ford II, a man who is both religious and burdened with a conscience.

Still, if Mikoyan's aim is to reach something like peace, or even a level of tolerable coexistence with

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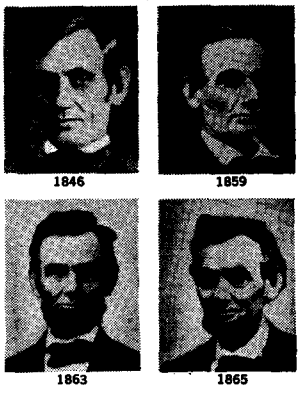

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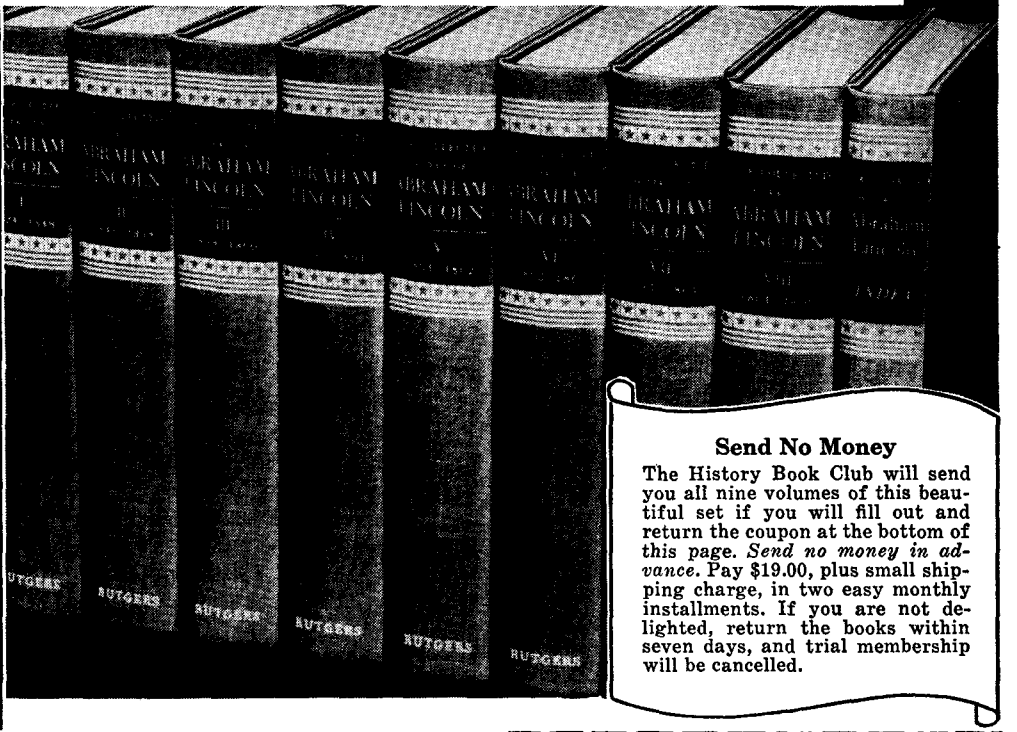

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the United States, it is with the politicians that he must deal. Consequently, he should have stayed in Washington and taken the opening of Congress as a God-sent gift. For there he might have had a chance to understand what makes our politicians tick.

In some respects, he would not have felt far from home. There, for instance, are those two Texans presiding over the two Houses. As in the state ceremonies of the Soviet government, where the rank of leadership is made clearly visible by the seating arrangements, Mr. Sam appears once more as the Speaker of the House—a position he will presumably occupy forever. Lyndon Johnson's leadership of the Senate has not the same record of permanency, but this is compensated for by his chance to move to the highest sphere of command.

For all the rest, and assuming as we must that Mikoyan had a minimum of information, he might have been astonished to see how the left-wing deviationists, expected to be "wild-eyed spenders," behaved like meek children when they actually got to the House of Representatives. Preparing to challenge the established order of things, they sent their chosen spokesman, Congressman Chet Holifield, to call on the venerable Speaker. But Rayburn simply replied, "Trust me," and the revolt collapsed. Mikoyan might have surmised from this spectacle that brainwashing in our kind of democracy can be, at one and the same time, quick, effective, and gentle.

But the behavior of our two parties at the opening of Congress, and the very nature of our party system, might have proved too hard a thing for him to understand. In the House, Republican leader Joseph Martin was purged. He confessed to no past mistakes, and if any anti-party activity was the cause of his demotion, the same tendencies that he has always shown are to be found—indeed, are even more apparent—in the man who replaces him, Representative Charles Halleck of Indiana—every bit as much a Taft man as Martin, and certainly not a new Republican or an Eisenhower man.

In the Senate, a group of really bona fide Eisenhower Republicans sought to wrest control from the Old Guard, but the President declared that he was keeping strictly out of the fight. Perhaps at this point a glimmer of light might have come to Mikoyan's befuddled mind. He might have thought that the trouble with the G.O.P. is that it is still afflicted with the cult of personality, if in a most peculiar way. For the personality that is the object of this cult has nearly faded out of the picture—and moreover refused to be reflected in any other personality.

The Mysterious West

Some of the mad paradoxes of subsidies—paying people to produce goods we don't want at a price we can't afford, and paying others to hold them for us or take them off our hands—have become so commonplace that we seldom notice them any more. We ran across one the other day, though, that might be worth a Congressional inquiry.

Early last fall, the Federal Maritime Board decided to raise the rate of subsidy paid to American ship lines for building their vessels in American yards. (This is not to be confused with the subsidy for *operating* the ships.) Theretofore, the government payment was figured to make up the difference between shipbuilding costs in the United States and those in Europe. Thenceforth, the comparison was to be with *Japanese* yards, which have enjoyed a sensational boom.

Lykes Bros. Steamship Co. was the first to enjoy the new subsidy rate. The government agreed to foot 48.4 per cent of the bill (believed to be a record) for four new freighters, to cost $36 million. Lykes turned the job over to the Sparrows Point yards of the Bethlehem Steel Company.

Just five days later, a tiny squib buried in the back pages of the New York *Times* caught our eye. It quoted a spokesman for Kawasacki Dockyard Industries of Kobe, Japan, to the effect that his yard had just landed an order to build three supertankers—for Bethlehem Steel.

These Things Were Said

¶ The tape of President Eisenhower voicing "peace on earth" from the Atlas satellite showed the feasibility of using privately-owned satellites for commercial advertising, [President of the International Astronautical Federation] Andrew G. Haley noted. He said technicians of the Ford Motor Co. and Coca-Cola have already started informal discussions. —*Variety.*

¶ Who knows but that some time in the next millennium a star ship from Communist earth will go up to celebrate this anniversary of the conquest of the universe, will approach the orbit of the rocket closely and its pilots will raise their helmets to greet the first space envoy from the land of socialism?—*Soviet astronomer Alexander Kazantsev as reported in the New York* Times.

¶ The preparation of meals . . . is one of the inevitable household chores of a backward society.—*Article on new communes in* Chinese People's Daily.

¶ When I found out about the deportation of Jews I ordered extra trains for them so that at least they could be more comfortable.—*Gauleiter Erich Koch on trial in Warsaw as a war criminal.*

¶ Jesus was perhaps a myth. But he was the people's myth—a carpenter and son of the Jewish folk. Some historians believe he was one of the leaders of an underground trade union movement.—*Michael Gold in the* Worker.

¶ If radiation is prolonged and given at a lower dose rate, a larger radiation dose can be accumulated before serious effects are encountered. . . . There are plenty of radiologists in the United States today who have absorbed 2,000 rad units in the last 20 years—four times the amount that would be fatal in one dose—and the only ill effect we have found so far is a greater incidence of leukemia.—*Dr. Austin M. Brues of the Argonne National Laboratory at a meeting of the American Nuclear Society.*

¶ Lieutenant General Clarence R. Huebner, director of the State Civil Defense Commission, predicted yesterday that within five years most Americans would be living in fallout shelters and would see sunshine only by taking a calculated risk. . . .

Earlier Hanson W. Baldwin, military news analyst of the New York *Times,* advised the information officer to tell the public what needed to be done "without making them unduly despondent."—*New York* Times.

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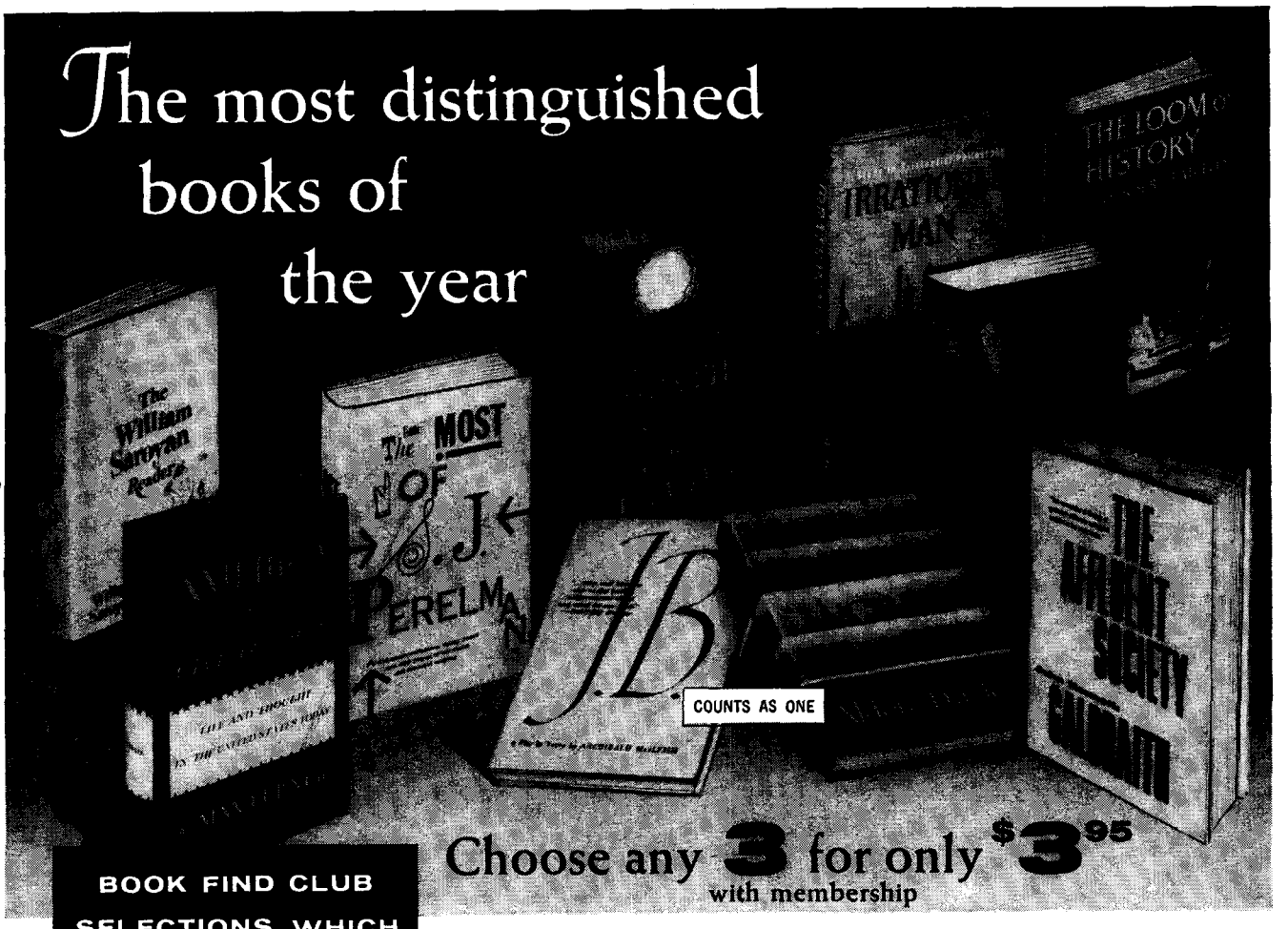

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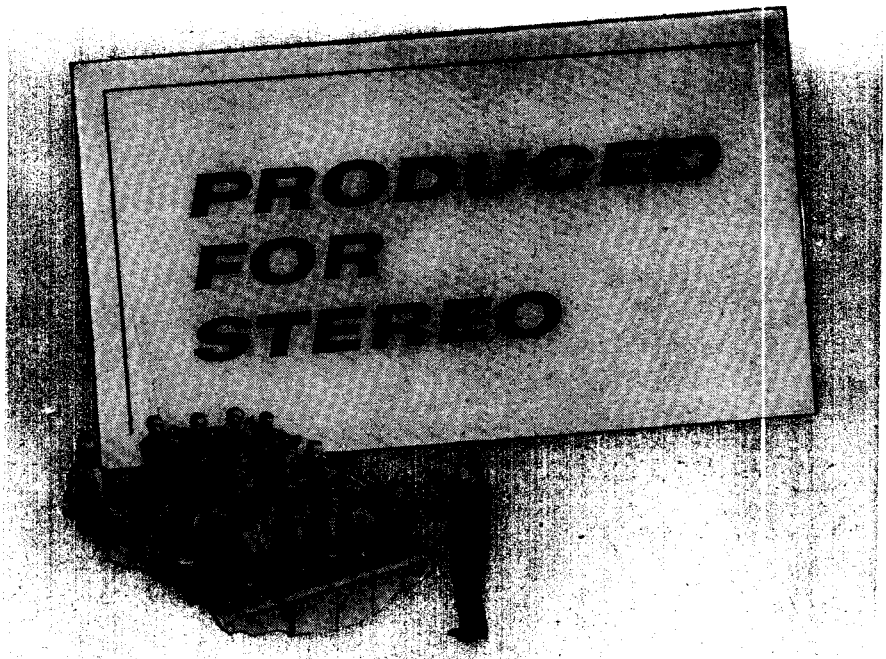

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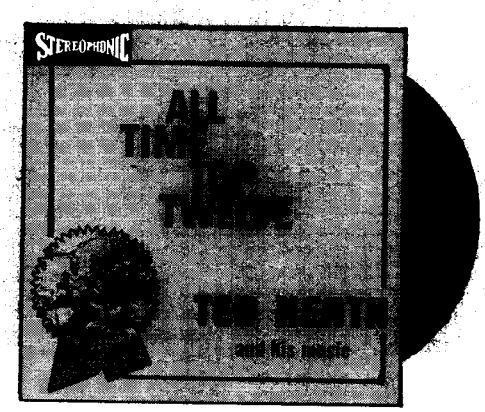

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THE GENERAL'S WARNING

To the Editor: Slowly but surely, certain courageous and informed newspapermen are breaking out to the American people the truth about the steady deterioration in our national defense as against that of the possible enemy. The latest and one of the best efforts to that end is "The Growing Missile Gap" by General Thomas R. Phillips in the January 8 issue of your magazine.

There may be some questioning of a detail or two in this article; but the over-all position, and the conclusions reached, will not be refuted by those who know the facts. The American people are being misled in this field by the present administration. That is the primary reason the Phillips article has special significance, because it gives the truth.

Under our form of government, the people have the right to know all truth that will not help the possible enemy. They want that truth, because they want also to do whatever is necessary to insure a just and lasting peace.

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Washington

PASTERNAK'S THEOLOGY

To the Editor: I wish to express deep disappointment with those of your selections from *Doctor Zhivago* (*The Reporter*, December 25, 1958) which unfairly seek to discredit Judaism and its teachers. Pasternak writes: "And the basic elements of this equipment are in the Gospels. What are they? To begin with, love of one's neighbor. . . . And then the basic ideals of modern man . . . the idea of free personality and the idea of life as sacrifice. . . . It was not until after the coming of Christ that time and man could breathe freely."

Now, love of one's neighbor is taught in Leviticus 19. The dignity of the human personality is taught in Genesis, where man is said to have been created "in the image of God." The ideal age of true peace, wisdom, and justice, when the weapons of war will cease to exist and every man will live quietly under his fig tree and vine, was envisioned by the great Hebrew prophets—Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, etc.

Although a Jew, the Nobel Prize winner was not given a Judaic education, and so his only knowledge of the Jewish people was of their persecution —and the prejudices of his Russian friends. His father, Leonid Pasternak, failed to associate with other Jews until almost the end of his career. The greatest Hebrew poet of modern times, Chaim Nachman Bialik (whom Pasternak the father painted when he "returned to his people"), wrote in an essay on the artist: ". . . Forty solid years [the period of Leonid Pasternak's artistic creativity] your people was

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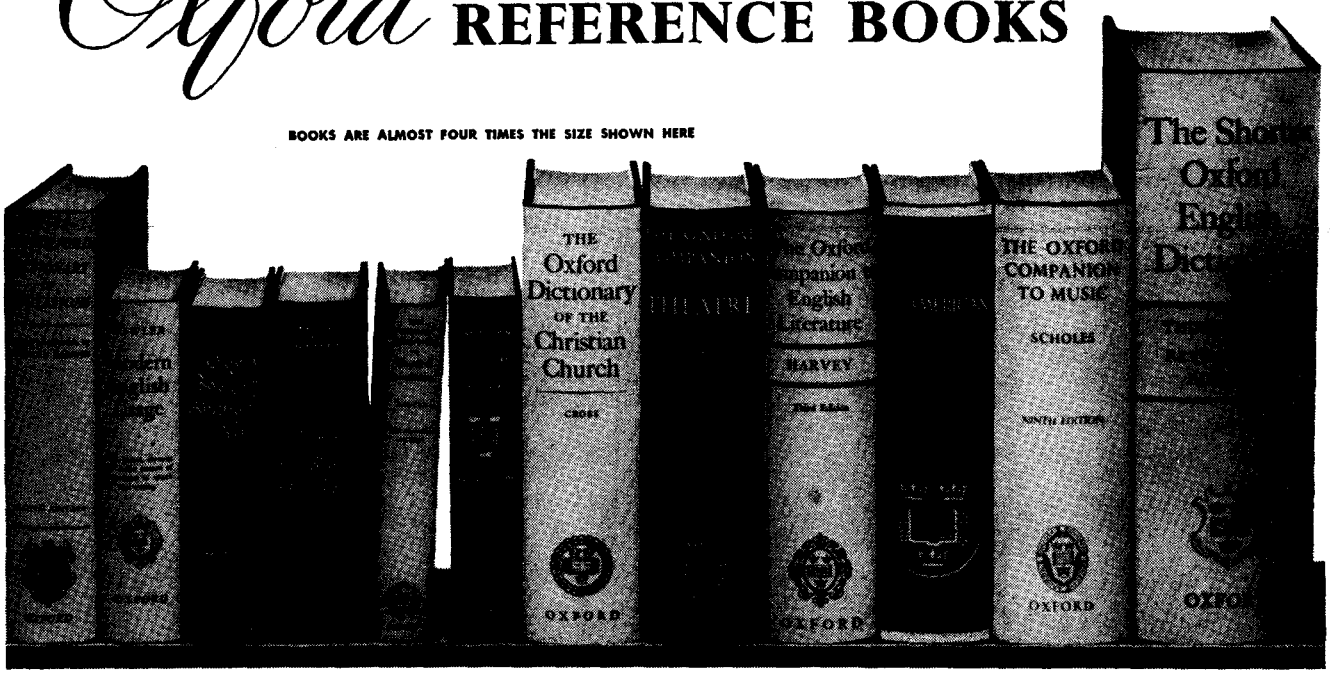

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locked in like a community of lepers. It was chained to a barren rock, the sources of its livelihood were stopped. It was deprived of light and air and human respect. . . . How were you able to enjoy your privileges which were given to you by the same hand which slapped the cheek of your people and your God seven times daily?" I can understand why Pasternak the son, with his Jewishly intellectual and emotional void and with his subconscious anti-Jewish bias, wrote as he did concerning the Jewish people and their convictions. But what leads *The Reporter* to select such "gems"?

RABBI NATHAN A. BARACK
Congregation Beth El
Sheboygan, Wisconsin

THE FILIBUSTER FIGHT

To the Editor: Lindsay Rogers ("Barrier Against Steamrollers," *The Reporter*, January 8) makes a masterful and unassailable presentation of the constitutional aspects of the proposed changes in Senate Rule XXII. I wholeheartedly share his viewpoint and plan vigorously to support it when the question comes before the Senate.

HERMAN E. TALMADGE
U.S. Senate
Washington

THE ASCOLI-DULLES LINE!

To the Editor: Your editorial "No Retreat from Berlin" (*The Reporter*, December 11) follows the sterile Dulles policy of saying "*Nyet*" to the Russians. It is bleak, empty, *status quo* in theme, devoid of a single constructive idea.

Which responsible person in the United States has really advocated a retreat from Berlin, as such? Is the Berlin situation to be left as a raw spot indefinitely for the Reds to turn crises on and off there at will, without effort by our side to work out a solution? Even such rabid admirers of Dulles as the editors of *Life* recently called for a demilitarized Germany.

If we adhere to the Ascoli-Dulles way of thinking, West Germany will grow in military strength. There is nothing Russia fears more than a rearmed Germany (and the same is true of France, Holland, Belgium, etc.—Germany has not had the opportunity to prove "there is no such thing as a wayward nation"). Nothing is more likely to cause Russia to precipitate a global thermonuclear holocaust than the threat of a West Germany armed with missiles and nuclear warheads.

ALLEN KLEIN
Mount Vernon, New York

To the Editor: As an old Berliner myself, I found that your editorial gives a true interpretation of Germany's problems and is, therefore, of great value for the furthering of understanding between our nations.

DR. THEUSNER, Consul
Federal Republic of Germany
Minneapolis

THE LAST, THE VERY LAST

To the Editor: I have just put down the article on Edmund Wilson, who is somehow "The Last Patrician" (Norman Podhoretz, *The Reporter*, December 25, 1958, and January 8, 1959). Exuding the more mystic phases of literary research and pedantic legerdemain, the article may well have its place on the rag sheets of *Obscurity Review* or the *Quarterly Journal of Non-Objective Literary Criticism*, but why it was placed smack-dab in the middle of my favorite fortnightly is as unknowable as its meaning. Chagrined and shaken by the journey through tortuous sentences that extended into paragraphs, I was nevertheless moved to tears of deliverance to find that while Someone-Or-Other might "under assault lose their right to an automatic assumption of the importance of the arts," that same Someone-Or-Other would never lose (O Liberty!) "the historical point of view." This is better news than the latest assurance of a balanced budget.

But there was one part of the article that shone clearly through the taffy pull of arid speculation, and that was the "box" giving a list of in-print Wilsoniana. It was essential, for we are now compelled to reread Edmund Wilson, not in revelation but in defense.

WILLIAM A. SOMMERS
Trevose, Pennsylvania

SPAIN

To the Editor: Whether or not our State Department is taking note of the growing opposition to Franco made up of moderate Socialists, independents, and liberal Catholics ("Uncommon Criminals," *The Reporter*'s "Notes," December 25), it would do well to observe the actions of men loyal to the régime.

While Spain is in the midst of a terrible economic crisis, while a bitter fight is going on in the chemical and metal industries and the banks for wage increases necessary in view of the spiraling inflation, the faithful members of the régime—including cabinet ministers—have been found to be taking dollars out of Spain. The government has admitted that some thirteen hundred people have $125 million to $400 million in Swiss banks. The list includes top people in the government as well as members of Spain's most powerful families. Apparently wealthy Spaniards, interested in their own self-preservation, have less faith in their government's stability than Mr. Dulles has.

Meanwhile Franco has his troubles with the 152 men whom you report he has arrested. On December 4, fearing a popular demonstration in front of the prison in Barcelona, Franco had the men removed during the middle of the night and sent to the central prison in Madrid. Despite these repressive measures and the recent more strictly enforced censorship, Franco cannot prevent the fact that men who are considered to be among the future leaders of Spain are becoming known. People have confidence in men such as Antonio Echevarria, Antonio Villar, Juan Reventos, and Juan Rion, to name just a few. They represent the new generation of men of intelligence and vigor. Unlike Franco, who considered Spain historically closer to Africa, these men consider Spain part of Europe and the western world. Most of these men are under forty, and the past with all its rancor has been forgotten. The civil war has receded into the distance, and now people are interested in the future.

During the past two years that future has become less remote. People have begun to sense a hesitation in Franco, and an increasing inability to maintain control. Fear of Franco, of new bloodshed, and of the unknown has been replaced by confidence in the united front of the moderate opposition. Today Spain has leaders and the people know who they are.

BARBARA PROBST SOLOMON
New York

BUSINESS GIFTS

To the Editor: The facts in the article "The Business of Christmas Giving" by George Kienzle (*The Reporter*, December 25) were shocking but not really surprising. But if an effort is to be made to stop practices so obviously immoral, the first move will have to come from the persons directly involved—the salesmen, buyers, and purchasing agents.

Aren't there professional associations, which include some of these occupations, that might take an effective stand against such practices? Doctors, engineers, lawyers, and other professions have bans against fee splitting, conflict of interest, ambulance chasing, and other such dubious acts in their codes of ethics, which do constitute at least a partial barrier to racketeering.

WILLIAM K. VIERTEL
Canton, New York

To the Editor: I wonder if the following item from the Lewiston, Idaho, *Morning Tribune* is a straw in the wind:

"Golden Grain Dairy has donated $600 to four area agencies, money the company has previously spent for Christmas gifts for establishments with which it does business.

"Gifts of $150 went to the Salvation Army, North Idaho Children's Home here, the Lewis-Clark Opportunity School and the St. Joseph's Children's Home at Slickpoo.

"E. J. Klamper, dairy manager, said 'we feel that not only Golden Grain, but the persons who would each year receive gifts from us, are giving to these people.'"

DOROTHY DAKIN
Pullman, Washington

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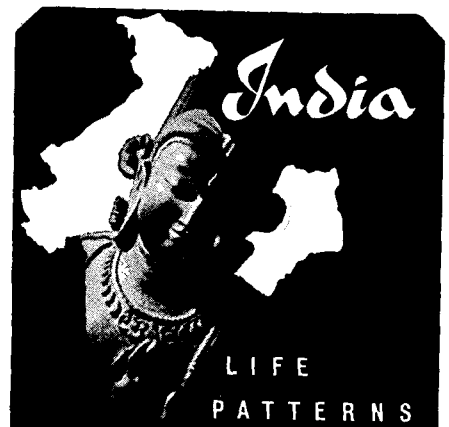

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WHO— WHAT— WHY—

THERE CAN BE no more suitable introduction to **Paul Jacobs's** article than the following dispatch in the New York *Times*:

TRENTON, *Jan. 6—State proposals to better the lot of migrant workers ran into stiff opposition from farmers here today. As a result, the State Migrant Labor Board agreed tonight to reconsider the changes it had proposed in the State Migrant Labor Code. . . .*

Requirements that all migrant housing units be provided with heat and hot and cold running water and that all migrant farm workers receive ample blankets from their employers were the primary amendments under consideration and the most bitterly opposed by the farmers.

Most of us who read the *Times* probably skipped over this little item. Whereas organized labor is a genuine—sometimes glamorous, sometimes notorious—subject, farm labor, like the farm laborer, is usually ignored. It is the organized interest groups whose voices are normally listened to, and whose pressures meet with a response. Yet in a democracy like ours, the fact that large blocs of citizens remain unorganized and underprivileged is bound to become self-denouncing. Paul Jacobs registers both this fact and the reaction to it of a number of people, Secretary Mitchell included.

WITH THE ADVENT of the European Common Market, European unity has made a gigantic step toward becoming a functional reality. We Americans should be able to recognize this, even if the representatives of the European nations fail to meet in some kind of Philadelphia and proclaim their determination to form a more perfect union. **Paul Bareau,** who analyzes the significance of the recent steps toward currency convertibility among the nations of western Europe, is on the staff of the London *News Chronicle* and also contributes regularly to the *Economist* and the *Banker*.

One of the brightest hopes for a European Union is that it may offer some way out of the impasse in Algeria, described in this issue by our Mediterranean correspondent, **Claire Sterling.** One naturally tends to think of the Algerian issue as a French problem or as a problem of Arab nationalism. But if anything is clear by now about Algeria, it is that its destiny cannot be defined within a merely French framework or a purely Arab one. The only prospect that could lead out of the present blind alley is an association of Algeria with a Europe that would be economically strong enough to undertake the expensive effort of modernization and politically strong enough to concede a considerable degree of political autonomy.

OUR WASHINGTON EDITOR, **Douglass Cater,** hails from Montgomery, Alabama, and the hearings of the Civil Rights Commission in that city, as well as the general state of Negro-white relations in the South today, are of much more than merely journalistic interest and concern to him. . . . **H. J. Kaplan** is the author of two novels, *The Plenipotentiaries* (1949) and *The Spirit and the Bride* (1951). He lived in France from 1945 to last year, when he returned to this country. . . . **Marya Mannes, Gerald Weales, Alfred Kazin,** and **Norman Podhoretz** are regular contributors to our "Views & Reviews" section. . . . **Steven Marcus,** who makes his first appearance in *The Reporter*, is on the English faculty of Columbia University.

Our cover—Midwestern farmland—is by **Charles MacMaster.**

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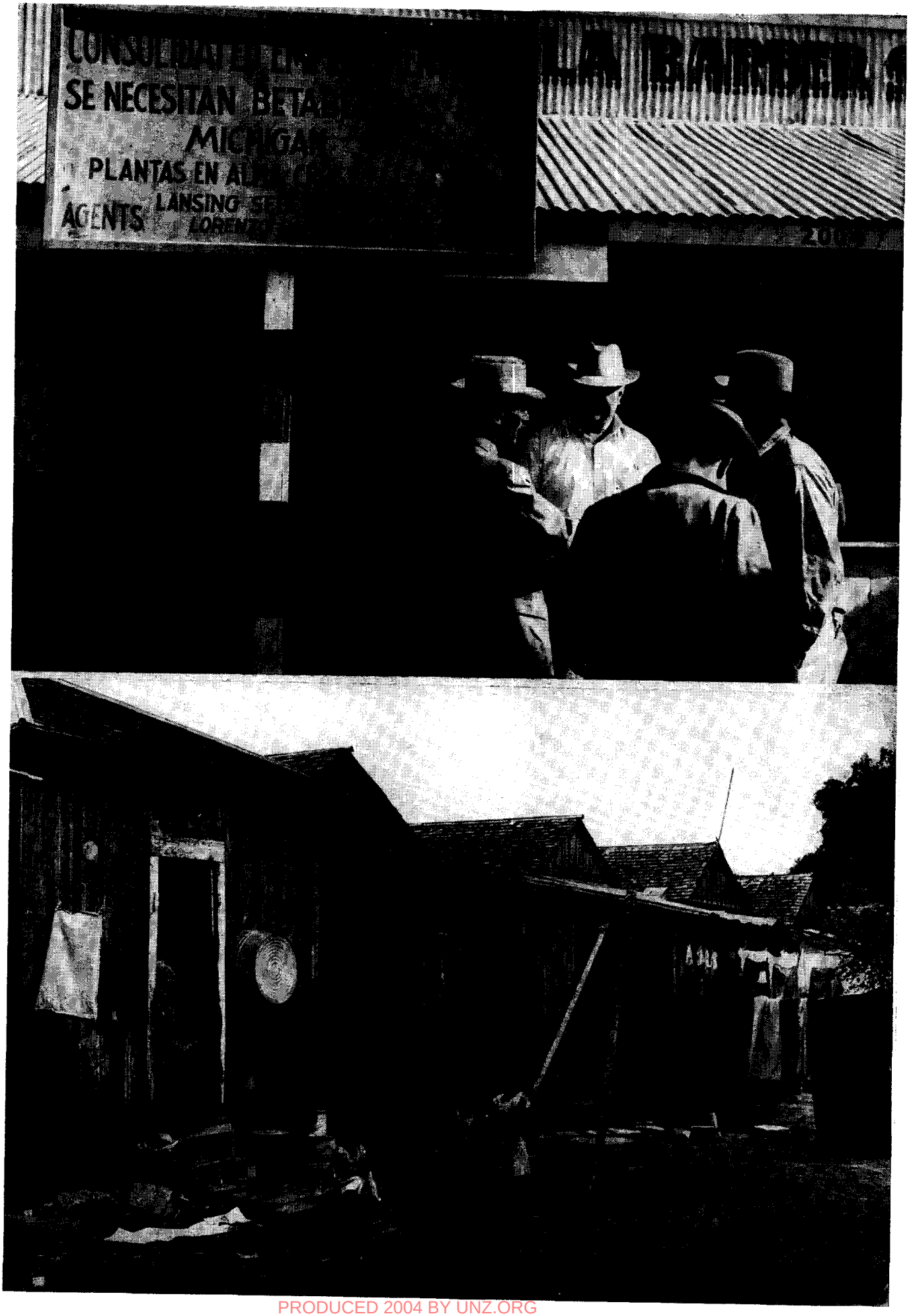

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The Forgotten People

PAUL JACOBS

Item—*A picker was badly hurt in a collision while being transported in a truck. He was eleven years old, and had been working fifty-four hours a week.*

Item—*The cattle feeder was walking alongside a tractor when it suddenly backed up and crushed his foot beneath the tread. He was nine years old.*

Item—*He was shoveling grain into a moving auger and suddenly he slipped and his foot was caught in the auger. When they pulled him lose, his foot was completely mangled. He was fourteen years old.*

NONE of these children was "helping out" on the family farm. All three were illegally employed as farm workers during 1957 in California, as were 124 other persons under sixteen years who were injured. One-third of these children, some of whom were permanently disabled, were employed in violation of state labor laws. Many others were employed in violation of Federal child-labor laws and state school-attendance laws. But in 1957 only one California farmer was prosecuted for violating state labor laws.

California is the only state that compiles statistics on injuries to young farm workers, and so it is known there, at least, that from 1950 to 1957 more than a thousand children under sixteen years were seriously injured in farm accidents. Since no other state collects such statistics, it is impossible even to estimate how many children in the entire country suffer the same fate. All that is known is that the number of children illegally employed by farmers has been rising for the past few years. "Agriculture," says U.S. Secretary of Labor James P. Mitchell, "violates the child labor provision more than any other industry."

Except in a very few states, agricultural workers are still not even covered by workmen's compensation laws. This in spite of the fact that farming has the third highest fatality rate of any industry in the United States, exceeded only by mining and construction. Indeed, during one year, 1956, the total number of men and women killed in agriculture exceeded that of any other industry.

Neither are agricultural workers covered by Federal minimum wage or maximum hours legislation. At a time when the labor movement is attempting to raise the minimum wage from $1 to $1.25 an hour, the average farm worker's hourly pay is sixty-eight cents, as compared to $2.79 an hour for the construction industry or even $1.05 an hour in laundries, whose workers are one of the lowest-paid nonagricultural groups in the nation. All adult farm workers are now supposed, by law, to receive certain benefits of the Social Security System for which both they and their employers make payments. But it is common knowledge that a great many farm employers ignore the law—a state of affairs the Social Security Administration is well aware of but incapable of doing anything about.

But it is not just farm-labor laws or Social Security regulations that are violated by farmers. In Oregon there are farm-labor contractors who supplement their already large incomes by selling marijuana and supplying prostitutes to farm workers as well as by getting commissions from liquor and food sold at jacked-up prices. In New York, investigation of forty farm-labor camps revealed that only three kept the payroll records required by law.

A Mean and Ugly Survival

In agriculture, the relations between workers and employers often seem to be a mean and ugly survival from an almost forgotten era. Employing at all times seven hundred thousand workers and sometimes more than two million, agriculture has successfully resisted the social and economic progress achieved through legislation and unionization by other millions of workers in industry. For a variety of reasons, agriculture, even though it is a major segment of the American economy, is still given an almost blanket exemption from modes of conduct now considered essential to a civilized society. Economically and politically unorganized, farm workers can do little on their own to help themselves. They possess neither the economic power to wrest better conditions from their employers nor the political influence to exert pressure upon legislators. They are the unorganized debris of an organizational society. They are indeed the forgotten people—forgotten by the labor movement, by the urban liberals, by almost everybody except a small band of men and women who have devoted their lives and meager resources to fighting what must often seem a hopeless battle.

Even when a law is passed, usually over the opposition of the farmers, giving farm workers a few minimal protections, it is chronically and matter-of-factly violated by farm employers, usually with no penalty involved even when they are caught. Most state legislatures are still dominated politically by the agricultural interests, and these same interests have a disproportionate influence in Congress. There are, moreover, still some farmers and farm organizations that fight off any regulation of farm workers' conditions just as bitterly and almost in the identical language they used in *The Grapes of Wrath*.

Investigating violations of the California state law dealing with illegal employment of minors is the

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responsibility of the state labor commissioner. Lacking an adequate staff, and with its main attention directed, almost inevitably, toward industrial workers, the commission has conducted such investigations haphazardly and indifferently. When questioned about an accident involving a fifteen-year-old boy whose toes were fractured in another auger accident, the labor commissioner's office stated:

"Inasmuch as this accident occurred at a location distant from any of the Division's offices, and for a considerable period of time there was no other Division business in the area, this matter was handled by sending the employer full information relative to child labor laws, together with a written warning."

There is not, in fact, very much the state labor commissioner can do, no matter how zealous he may be. "What jury of farmers will convict another farmer illegally employing minors when so many of them do it?" asks an official in the commissioner's office. "And, before we can get a conviction, we have to find a local district attorney who is willing to file a complaint. This is not easy either, in a farm area."

The Migrant Streams

The hired farm work force in the United States is composed of three main groups: regular workers, seasonally employed workers, and the foreign farmhands, mostly Mexicans brought in under a special program approved by Congress. The seven hundred thousand regular hired workers, those employed for more than 150 days a year by one employer, are almost all male; they take care of livestock, repair buildings, maintain equipment, drive tractors, and generally work without supervision. Frequently they live on or near the farm where they are employed. About half of this group are hired by the largest farms; forty-eight per cent of them are working for farms of more than 1,900 acres.

The million seasonal farm workers normally work less than 150 days in a year, and they work for more than one employer. They do work that can be completed in a short time and are usually paid by the day, hour, or piece. They clear land, lay fertilizer, chop, weed, and do the harvest work—cutting, picking, packing, and toting. Forty-eight per cent of all hired seasonal workers were employed on the two largest groups of cotton and fruit-and-nut farms in Texas, California, Arkansas, Mississippi, Louisiana, Tennessee, and North Carolina.

The seasonal farm workers split into two main groups: the larger group of local day-haul employees who may go out with a different farmer each day and are picked up by truck from a central employment point; and the much smaller number of migrants, mostly employed by labor contractors in the South and West and by crew leaders in the East. The contractors or crew leaders take the migrants from farm to farm along the migrant stream. They set a flat price with the farmer for the harvesting work, then paying the workers from their own pockets, or else they get a commission from the farmer for each worker supplied. The lush financial rewards open to an unscrupulous labor contractor are obviously tempting, and there has been a sharp increase in the number of people with criminal records who have applied for contractors' licenses in California.

There are six major streams of migratory workers:

(1) The one on the Atlantic Coast is made up of about 60,000 workers, most of whom are Negro, supplemented by workers from Puerto Rico and Mexican-Americans.

(2) The sugar-beet stream starts in Texas and goes up into the North Central and Mountain States. This group, too, consists of about 60,000 workers, almost all Mexican-Americans.

(3) The wheat and small-grain harvest migrants also come up from Texas, generally as combine teams, and work north to Montana and North Dakota. About 30,000 men, also of Mexican descent, do this work.

(4) About 80,000 workers of Mexican descent plus Negroes harvest cotton, starting out from Texas with one group moving off into the Mississippi Delta and a bigger one going westward into New Mexico, Arizona, and southern California.

(5) From Oklahoma, Arkansas, and western Tennessee, about 30,000 people of early American stock move north and west during the harvest season, picking fruit and tomatoes.

(6) Finally, there are about 120,000 workers, of all backgrounds, working in the Western States, up and down the Pacific Coast.

In addition to the 380,000 American migrant workers, about half a million foreign farm laborers are brought into the United States each year. Most of these are the "braceros" from Mexico, who more and more are replacing the seasonal American workers, both local and migrant.

Seventy-five per cent of the regular year-round farm workers and nearly fifty per cent of all the seasonal workers were employed by only little more than one-tenth of all the farmers. Thus one-tenth of farmers cultivate nearly half the land, producing three-fifths of all the vegetables, nearly half of all the fruits and nuts, and two-fifths of all the cotton. Since 1940, the number of the nation's farms has declined from 6,350,000 to less than 5,000,000 in 1957. At the same time, the average farm increased from 174 acres in 1940 to more than 242 acres in 1954.

The average yearly income for all farm workers is only $1,250, including all nonfarm cash income and roughly $200 for perquisites. Farm workers, in fact, only receive twice as much pay now as they did in 1933, even though farm productivity has gone up nearly threefold since then. In some farm work, like the picking of cotton, the real value of the wages paid to the farm workers has actually declined since 1943.

It is because farm workers have such a low income level that so many of their children work alongside them in the fields. The money earned by the children is essential to keep the family on even a bare below-subsistence level. And so the children grow up badly educated because local schools are reluctant to take them as pupils, sickly because medical facilities are not easily available to them.

Why does this large group of people continue in farm work? Primarily because no other work is open to them. The minority groups among them find that much industrial employment is closed to them, while the white workers are generally unskilled and are ill adapted to

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urban life. The kind of lives they lead incapacitates them—and their children—for leading any other. And so they go on living as regular farmhands in shabby houses on the fringes of agricultural communities or on the farms, the migrants in tents, barracks, and occasionally decent camps.

All Night in a Truck

These men, women, and children are utterly exhausted after working long hours in the field. Many of the children suffer from chronic diarrhea. They get horribly cramped, traveling long distances without sleep in broken-down trucks. And if some growers had their way, the trucks would never stop for rest. When the Interstate Commerce Commission held a hearing in May, 1957, to consider setting up safety regulations to govern interstate transportation of farm workers, it was informed by S. H. Butler of the Green Giant Company, Dayton, Wisconsin: "We feel that the requirement banning travel from 8:00 P.M. to 6:00 A.M. would work a hardship on the laborers being transported as well as upon employers. It has been our experience that these trucks can complete the trip from Texas to Washington in from fifty to sixty hours, with stops only for meals, gasoline, and general 'stretching.' The men seem to arrive in good physical condition and with a good mental attitude."

At the same 1957 ICC hearing, the Tri-State Packers Association, Inc., of Easton, Maryland, protested a proposal that trucks carrying farm workers be required to have seats. "The floors of the truck in which the persons are transported are normally covered with bedding or sacks of clothing which provide a more suitable resting place than would seats of the type suggested by the Commission—the requirement that seats be provided appears to be extremely undesirable. It is unsatisfactory as a safety measure for the reason that if seats are not provided, the transients will sit or lie on bedding or clothing and they would be in far less danger in the event of a sudden stop than would be true if they were sitting on wooden benches. In addition, these trucks are used to haul produce to the processor—it would be practically impossible to attach the

seats securely and still use the vehicle to haul produce."

But a lack of seats did not act "as a safety measure" for the forty-one American men, women, and child farm workers jammed into the eight-by-fifteen-foot back of a dilapidated one-and-a-half-ton truck that pulled out from the side of a North Carolina highway on June 6, 1957, directly into the path of a ten-ton tractor-trailer. Seconds later, after a grinding crash, twenty broken and mutilated bodies were strewn over the highway. Of the forty-one who had been crammed together in that tiny space without seats, only five were unhurt. The North Carolina crash broke the record for this kind of accident—a record set previously in August, 1947, in Texas, when nineteen farm workers were killed.

Just as on the national level some powerful farm organizations bitterly—and usually successfully—resist any Federal regulation that affects them (except increased subsidies, of course), so too on the state level is the farm worker left unprotected. The prospects for including farm workers under the compensation acts are "bleak," writes Harold Katz, an authority on workmen's compensation law, "since farm organizations, which have traditionally opposed such coverage, exert considerable influence in our state legislatures."

The extent of the influence of farm organizations on state legislatures can easily be seen even in a state like California, where farm workers are somewhat better off than in many other states. A California state law provides that an illegally employed minor who suffers an accident while working shall receive an additional fifty per cent increased payment in workmen's compensation, paid by the employer—unless the employer is a farmer. In that case, the penalty payment is not made.

Why this exception? State officials shrug. "It's the farm lobby in Sacramento," they say. "That lobby has lots of power."

Sixteen Cents an Hour

There is no question that agricultural employers have a special difficulty in that they require large numbers of farm workers for short periods of time, lest an entire crop be lost. But if farm wages go up, will food prices necessarily follow? It is clear that the relation is not so simple as that: the labor cost is only one factor in the unstable price structure of those agricultural products that call for the use of migrant labor, and generally not the most important one. Even after a crop is harvested, especially if it be fruits and vegetables, the market price depends

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to an extraordinary extent upon factors over which the grower has had little control; the weather's effect upon the crop's quality, its size, its availability, and the fickle public taste. In Florida last winter, a freeze hit the orange crop. Thousands of farm workers, both local and migrant, faced such critical unemployment that the National Council of Churches appealed to President Eisenhower to establish a state of emergency. But their employers, the Florida growers, have made handsome profits because the freeze put oranges in short supply and the frostbitten fruit could be marketed as "fair" frozen orange juice at a high price per can.

So too with other fruit and vegetable crops. Melon growers in California's Imperial Valley can make or lose fortunes overnight. But becoming a millionaire or a pauper does not depend on the wages paid the melon pickers; rather it depends on the quality of the melons and the time that they reach the market.

In the face of this enormously complicated problem, much of organized agriculture insists on keeping farm wages down. The farm employers' attitude was neatly summed up by a Texas congressman, himself a farmer: "I think the employers, everyone, would protest the twenty-cent minimum wage. Or a ten-cent minimum wage or any other minimum wage." As a matter of fact, Texas growers are accustomed to paying their farm workers sixteen cents an hour for a sixty-hour week.

The payment of substandard wages is justified by farm employers on the uncertainty of their profits. But while their employees are penalized in advance because of the growers' possible unknown financial loss, the farmers do not make any additional payments to their workers if the crop does bring in a large profit. The workers' wages remain the same —abysmally low—no matter what profit the farmer makes. No department-store owner expects to lower the pay of a saleswoman if a dress has to be marked down in price because it doesn't sell, but farmers successfully demand that *their* workers run all the risks of the market place without receiving any of its benefits.

So too with coverage of farm workers under state compensation laws. Farm organizations bitterly resist paying for such coverage, still relying on the fiction that all American farmers are "small," not able to afford insurance. Even if this were true—which it is not, since the great majority of farm workers are employed by the very largest and most profitable farms—what difference would it make? Small industrial employers must be covered by insurance as well as by wage and hour laws. Extending such coverage to small industrial operations was difficult, but it was done. No one would deny that protecting farm workers by law will also be difficult, but it too can be accomplished if farm organizations can somehow be convinced that arrogant refusals even to discuss the matter are not substitutes for social responsibility.

There is in particular one group of large farmers, associated with the American Farm Bureau Federation, that generally opposes any Federal or state regulations affecting employer-worker relationships, while at the same time it attempts to represent itself as speaking for the overwhelming majority of all farmers.

Attacking an official of the Farmers' Union, whose membership is made up of smaller farmers, for supporting regulations governing the transportation of migrant workers, J. Kenneth Robinson, president of the Agricultural Conference Board of Virginia and also representing the Frederick County Fruit Growers' Association, said: "The Farmers' Union representative this morning mentioned the fact that they stood 100 per cent behind the regulations as proposed. I would point out their membership of 300,000 farm families is considerably less representative than the Farm Bureau's membership of 1,600,000 farm families."

In fact, however, the 1,600,000 Farm Bureau Federation membership includes not just farmers but bankers, grocers, hardware merchants, filling-station operators, and a variety of other businessmen in rural communities, all of whom display their membership placards in store windows. And among the farmers, the Farm Bureau represents the half million biggest and richest who employ seven-tenths of the hired labor. It is these who are leading the fight against Federal regulation. "Minimum wages would result in limiting the employment of inefficient workers and would seriously limit the income of the average to superior workers," states one Farm Bureau official, while another demands that the Department of Labor "cease forcing users of Mexican national labor to furnish housing to Mexican national laborers that includes standards more rigorous than those usually provided domestic agricultural labor."

'We Are Quite Bitter'

In 1957, the "users" of foreign labor employed nearly half a million foreign farm workers, mostly braceros, Mexicans legally brought into the United States first during the Second World War to meet the shortage of domestic labor, and in increasing numbers each year since then, under the terms of a treaty negotiated between the Mexican and American governments. The bracero program, the subject of much heated controversy, is administered by the Department of Labor. Before a farmer may employ braceros, the department must certify that his need for their services cannot be met by domestic labor.

Some twelve thousand British West Indians, 1,000 Japanese, 6,500 Canadians, several hundred Filipinos, and groups of Bahamians were also brought into the United States, but on temporary entry cards, under the control of the Immigration Service. Some Mexicans also come into the country this way, including one group brought to Oregon, where the farmers then took away their permits to make it impossible for them to leave the farms while keeping them living in unspeakably bad conditions.

In attacking the Department of

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Labor for imposing regulations governing the living conditions of the braceros, the Farm Bureau people are frequently joined by another group, the contracting associations set up by growers to bring the Mexican workers into the United States, house them, and then supply them to the association members as they are needed. E. S. McSweeney, secretary of the Arizona Cotton Growers Association, one such group, complained to a Congressional subcommittee in 1958 that "we as farmers or farm organizations" have "become quite bitter about this constant regulation down to the minimum detail." One of the camps operated by Mr. McSweeney's association was described by a Labor Department official on a 1956 inspection tour of camps in California and Arizona as "by far the worst . . . Each unit is about ten by twelve. Four men and a kerosene stove are squeezed into each hut. . . . The door to some of the huts can't be closed from the inside. As a result chickens invade and leave their droppings on the floor. Crushed woolly worms are also very much in evidence inside the huts. The garbage is infrequently collected. The shower floor is covered with filth and smells like an outhouse."

In fact, Department of Labor regulation has been neither constant nor consistent. Lacking an adequate compliance staff, the department has been under pressures from the inception of the bracero program—pressures exerted by the growers and expressed through their organizations and their congressmen. Such pressure is focused mainly around three problems: the standards by which the department assesses the growers' needs for employing braceros, the department's establishment of minimum wage rates for the braceros, and the housing requirements specified by the department.

UNDER the terms of Public Law 78, which governs the importation and employment of Mexican nationals, no braceros may be employed if domestic labor is available to do the work at the prevailing rate of pay. The state employment services, often susceptible to grower influence, are charged with the responsibility of determining whether there is enough domestic labor available and, if not, certifying the need for braceros to the Labor Department.

During the spring recession of 1958, a group of growers in Texas claimed that they needed braceros for harvesting. On March 31 they communicated this need, by letter, to Maurice Acers, commissioner of the Texas Employment Commission, who replied: "You know I understand the problem. Count on me to do everything humanly possible." But on April 15, an attorney for one growers' association reported to his clients on a meeting with the Texas Employment Commission that "apparently because of the alleged recession back in the east, pressure had been brought to bear upon the Department of Labor causing them to shut down the bracero program. They further stated that the Department of Labor was constantly and continuously making things tougher to allow braceros to come into this country and making more and more requirements for them to meet."

The attorney then reported that the Department of Labor had wired the Texas Employment Commission, insisting that the Texas farmers attempt to fill their need for tractor drivers in Oklahoma and Missouri, where single workers were available at a dollar an hour, as a prior condition to the use of braceros. The attorney wrote that "The above quoted telegram caused quite a stir at this meeting, because, as stated by the Texas Employment Commission, this was the first time the U.S. Department of Labor had ever attempted to require the farmers of Texas to go outside the state of Texas to locate potential employees and recruit them there, and also the first time that they had ever attempted to set a definite wage rate."

'Outside the State'

One reason given by the attorney for the growers' unwillingness to recruit tractor drivers "outside the state" in Missouri and Oklahoma while they were willing to recruit "outside the state" in Mexico was: "The farmers did not have any housing facilities to take care of a family type of migratory workers. That since the bracero had come into play in this area, a few of the farmers had been able to construct good bachelor quarters for the braceros, but the married domestic was unwilling to live in such quarters and do the job required. . . . Where a man now is able to house ten unmarried or bachelor farm laborers, he would only be able to put one family unit or one worker."

Another objection raised by the association to the procedure of going "outside the state" was that "a tractor driver in this area does more than just drive a tractor. He will be required to drive a tractor as his principal job, but at the same time will also be required to irrigate, move tubes, fill in ditches, and dig in the mud. In addition to this, he will not have an eight hour day but will be required to work from twelve to sixteen hours a day. Experience has taught us that very few domestic laborers . . . are willing to do this type of work for that many hours for the pay scale that can be paid."

The cost of making trips to Oklahoma and Missouri, which they

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would have had to bear, was also an issue to the Texas growers, perhaps especially since under the bracero program the U.S. government, not the growers, bears the cost of feeding the workers at the assembly stations in Mexico and the cost of transporting them to the American reception centers and feeding them en route as well as there.

QUITE APART from the question of wages and housing, however, the way in which the bracero program is conducted depends upon how well the treaty between the United States and Mexico is enforced. Here, even with the best good will in the world, the Labor Department is handicapped by a lack of compliance officers, and by the few opportunities for training those it does have. The department's field offices in Arkansas and Texas had only thirty-five men to serve more than a hundred thousand braceros in those two states during 1957. Even this was an improvement over 1951, when only fourteen compliance officers served the same area. A similar shortage of compliance officers has existed in other areas. Although there are more now, there were only seven officers in 1956 to cover the entire southern California and Arizona area. One of them was given the responsibility of inspecting approximately two hundred camps.

The compliance officers frequently exchange their low civil-service salaries for the higher financial rewards of the contracting associations. One of the camps described in 1956 by Department of Labor investigators as being "over-crowded and filthy" was operated by an association whose manager was a former compliance officer; and Mr. McSweeney of the Arizona Cotton Growers Association stated that the two government compliance officers in his area prefer now to be called "employers' service representatives."

Father Godfrey Makes a Call

The Mexican consuls in the United States are supposed to help enforce the agreement. The Reverend John F. Godfrey, a Catholic priest of Chesterfield, Missouri, has described in some detail what happens when a bracero complains to him about a contract violation.

Father Godfrey lives close to St. Louis, where there is a Mexican consul, while "the field representative from the Department of Labor is situated in Kansas City, 250 miles away. The Mexican bracero is advised to present his complaint to the Mexican Consul. I explain to him that I will call the Mexican Consul on the telephone and then he can explain his difficulty in Spanish to the Mexican Consul. The usual reaction of the bracero is 'No, Padrecito, the Mexican Consul is not my friend, he is the friend of the patron.' If I think the matter is serious and ought to be presented for consideration, I will say, 'If you do not present it, I will present it to him.' Then, in the presence of the bracero, I call the Mexican Consul and explain to him the difficulties the Mexican has presented to me. Usually I get a lot of double talk from the Consul. He explains to me that the contract should be interpreted this way or that way; often he interprets it more in favor of the employer than he does of the bracero. However, once in a while I just lay it on the line for him and he does something for me, but all in all the dealing with the Mexican Consul is a very unsatisfactory experience."

Complaints about the behavior of Mexican consuls toward the braceros come from other sources than priests. Abe F. Levy, a union attorney in Los Angeles, states that in one case when he began a workmen's compensation action for a bracero who had been hurt while working but did not know he was entitled to compensation, the Mexican consul first attempted to get Levy out of the case, then attempted to have the bracero shipped back to Mexico before final disposition of the case. Levy charges that many bracero compensation cases are deliberately stalled by the insurance companies until the bracero has left the country and then are settled for perhaps twenty-five per cent of normal compensation. When such a bracero has left the country, or when death benefits are paid for a bracero who has been killed, the payments are made to the Mexican consuls. They in turn, it is assumed, send the money on to Mexico.

Read the Small Type

The insurance company that writes some of the workmen's compensation and all nonoccupational disability and life insurance for the braceros coming into California also benefits from the consuls' failure to protect the braceros' interests. Because of the low number of claims made, this company gives a high refund to the employers who pay for the workmen's compensation insurance; and the company maintains an extremely profitable retention rate for itself on the nonoccupational disability and life-insurance policy which is paid for by the bracero. The surprisingly low number of claims is probably the result of either the braceros' ignorance of their rights or the fact that the bracero is out of the country before his claim can be processed. In California at least, when the braceros pass through the reception center they are not informed of the benefits to which they are entitled under the policies, although a Mexican consul is at the reception center.

These insurance policies also figure in an investigation initiated by Governor "Pat" Brown, when he was attorney general, into charges that at least one growers' association in the Imperial Valley deducted premium payments from braceros' pay checks but did not remit them to the insurance company. Discovering this, the company subsequently collected the premiums from the association—and kept them, even though the braceros from whom the money had been taken had long since returned to Mexico.

Many serious charges that the bracero program was being badly administered were made in a study written in 1956 by Dr. Ernesto

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Galarza and published by the Joint United States-Mexico Trade Union Committee. Galarza, one of the devoted band attempting to improve the lot of farm workers, made his charges on the basis of an investigation he conducted in California. His accusations were hotly denied by the growers' associations and also by Secretary of Labor Mitchell, who wrote in September, 1956, that the study "contains some very serious inaccurate statements and misleading allegations concerning the conditions under which Mexican workers are employed in agriculture in this country." But a few months later a report of an investigation by Department of Labor officials stated that although Galarza's arguments were "specious," many of the unsavory conditions he described did exist.

However, Secretary Mitchell seems more genuinely concerned with attempting to solve the bracero problem than any of his predecessors were. There are signs of recognition within the department that the bracero program has become a national disgrace, requiring action to protect the standards of both braceros and Americans.

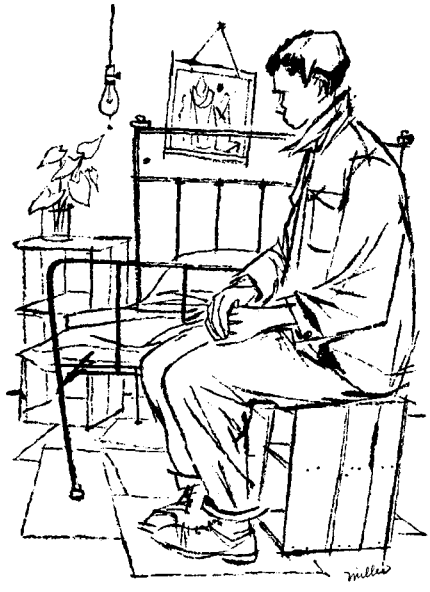
One of the factors complicating the Labor Department's ability to perform this role, and possibly accounting for its somewhat cautious attitude, is the continuing effort being made by the growers and some congressmen to take supervision of the foreign-labor program away from the Labor Department and put it, instead, under the jurisdiction of the Immigration Service. Some Labor Department officials believe that if they antagonize the growers too much, the effort to swing the program to the Immigration Service might become more determined and successful. The Immigration Service permits the growers to make their arrangements directly with the foreign workers through their own governments, and leaves supervision over wages or working conditions to those governments. It was under just such an arrangement that Bahamians were imported to work as apple pickers by Virginia growers, ending up in labor camps (including one operated by Senator Byrd) under ghastly conditions.

An official of the Joint United States-Mexico Trade Union Committee charged that under a similar agreement with the Japanese government, the Japanese workers pay their own round-trip transportation and subsistence between Japan and the United States, have no voice in setting their wages or in selecting their own representatives, may be used as strikebreakers, pay five per cent of their wages to welfare funds in which they have no voice, and must contribute fifty per cent of their earnings to a special fund. If the worker returns to Japan after finishing his contract, his earnings are then returned to him; but if he fails to return or dies in America, the money goes to the Japanese government.

Puerto Rican farm workers, who are brought here under the protection of the Puerto Rican government, are treated a great deal better. According to a Puerto Rican official, the conditions demanded by Puerto Rico for wage guarantees, workmen's compensation, adequate housing, and other safeguards "sounded strange to many employers." The official went on to say that "This attitude has also changed, partly because there is a clause in the agreement which provides that representatives of the Puerto Rico Department of Labor must be allowed access to the men, the housing, and the payrolls."

A Child's Day

But in spite of the Labor Department's staff problem, in spite of the continuing resistance of growers—supported by farm congressmen—to regulation, in spite of all the loopholes and the violations, Public Law 78 does provide some minimal Federal protections to the Mexican farm worker. Such Federal protection and supervision are almost completely denied the American farm worker.



A migrant's children may either have to work in the fields or stay unattended in a filthy camp. Not many communities have adequate child-care centers for the children of migrant farm workers. "There are very few facilities available to migrant mothers for day-care of their children," states a report of the Florida State Board of Health. "Much publicity is given to those maintained by church groups, but in all fairness it must be said that they are too few and too expensive to be available to many migrants."

For the nonmigrant seasonal farm workers, life is not very much better. They too frequently work for contractors on a day-haul basis. In a typical Florida farm household, the eleven-year-old daughter of the family was absent from school forty-one days out of eighty-five because the mother had to work and could not afford to pay a day-care center's fees for her three children under six. A Board of Health report of her activities for one week reads as follows:

"Sunday: picked six baskets of beans, earned $3.60. Monday: no work available in Belle Glade; paid $.50 for her transportation by truck to 'the coast,' where the crop was poor. Picked three baskets, earned $1.80. Tuesday: rained, no work. Wednesday: picked four baskets of beans, earned $2.40. No more work available that day. Thursday: picked five baskets of beans, earned $3.00; transportation cost $.50. Friday: picked eight baskets of beans (in eleven hours in the field), earned $4.80. Saturday: 'chopped' peppers in the field for twelve hours, earned $6.00.

"The total earnings for the week (less transportation costs) with which to support herself and her four children were $20.60."

Children of school age were involved somewhat differently in a revealing incident that occurred in September, 1955, when there was a shortage of prune pickers in the Santa Clara County, California, area because, stated the California De-

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AN INTERVIEW WITH SECRETARY MITCHELL

"All agricultural workers ought to be covered by some form of minimum wage and maximum hours legislation," Secretary of Labor Mitchell said in an interview granted to *The Reporter*. "Perhaps the wage level for such legislation might have to be lower than the present $1 minimum and different overtime schedules established, but somehow farm workers should be covered.

"I would enter several caveats, however," the Secretary continued. "First, in our proper attempt to advance the well-being of the farm workers, we must be careful not to destroy the economy or set up sudden drastic increases in the price of food. We should try to find out what the industry can reasonably afford and then make the necessary improvements extend over a period of time.

"What is needed immediately is a good survey of the entire wage and hour problem in agriculture so that we will have some accurate knowledge of the facts and can go forward from there."

In discussing the farm workers' situation, Secretary Mitchell pointed out that the Labor Department has very little authority to intervene on behalf of the American farm workers. The department is restricted, he said, to supervising the controversial foreign-worker program.

"Just recently," said the Secretary, "we made two steps in the bracero program that really brought the wrath of Congress down on our heads, especially the congressmen from the agricultural states. We got into housing standards and into piecework and incentive systems of payment. For three days I argued up on the Hill and it wasn't an easy argument."

There has been a gradual change in the attitude taken by farm employers toward the braceros, according to Mitchell. "The farmers have gone through three or four stages in recent years. They've had to raise their sights from absolutely no government control of the activities to a minimum of legality. At least, housing and wages are now controlled.

"From the department's viewpoint, the main problem of the bracero program is to protect the standards of American workers. We'd prefer no braceros, and we do try to keep a tight rein on the program. The biggest difficulty is our inability to enforce the standards we've set for the program. We simply don't get enough money from Congress to carry out a proper enforcement program. Another difficulty, now being overcome, was that our own people in the department always had a feeling that the program was a temporary one. So not much attention was paid to the administrative problems of the foreign-worker program since it was felt that the whole thing was just kind of a left-handed adjunct to the department. But that's being overcome now as fast as possible and we're enforcing more—as much as possible."

Secretary Mitchell stated that there were a number of differences in the foreign-labor enforcement procedures. In the case of the Japanese, he said, "The department didn't get into the program until after the fact. The farmers went out on their own initiative and made the contracts with the Japanese government. All that we can do now is try to make those contracts conform with the standards of the Mexican program."

The farmers who hire Bahamians and British West Indians are completely free of government supervision, according to Mr. Mitchell, "but the numbers brought in are small and it isn't too much of a problem, except perhaps in some individual cases."

All through the interview, Mr. Mitchell gave the impression of being familiar with and concerned about the problem of farm workers, domestic and foreign. It is certainly easier for a Republican than a Democratic Secretary of Labor to resist pressure from Democratic congressmen from the South and Far West, where farmers are large-scale users of hired labor, but Mr. Mitchell has earned the reputation within the department of honestly trying to improve the farm workers' lot.

"For too long," he said, "farm-worker problems have been neglected by everybody. That's wrong. Farm workers shouldn't be forgotten people."

partment of Employment, there was a "loss of students, housewives leaving to enter children in schools, and men drafted to fight forest fires." According to state law, children cannot be employed during school hours. The opening dates for schools throughout the county were therefore postponed a week, "at the request of ranchers in the area," according to one of the local newspapers. As a result of this postponement, approximately 34,000 school children went to school a week late because the ranchers in the area needed, again according to the employment department report, 250 prune pickers.

THERE are some signs of hope in this hitherto grim situation. For too many years, the farm-labor problem has been almost solely the concern of a few groups like the National Council on Agricultural Life and Labor and the National Sharecroppers Fund, whose yearly money-raising appeals are wearily opened and rather indifferently put aside. For too many years, the priests, nuns, and laymen associated with the Catholic Council for the Spanish Speaking and the National Catholic Rural Life Conference have shouldered their great burden without much help. For too many years, the representatives of the American Friends Service Committee have had to appear alone before state and national legislative committees. For too many years, union leaders, with a few exceptions, have either ignored farm workers or considered them political and economic pawns, useful only as sacrifices for larger stakes. But recently there has been a widening public interest in the problem. The governors of some states, among them Pennsylvania and Oregon, have set up special committees of farm groups and prominent farmers. Early in February, the National Advisory Committee on Farm Labor, a new group of respected and distinguished citizens, will hold public hearings in Washington on the farm-labor problem. There seems to be a revival of the instincts for social compassion and indignation—qualities recently absent from our society, perhaps because it is so difficult for the prosperous majority to identify itself with a destitute minority.

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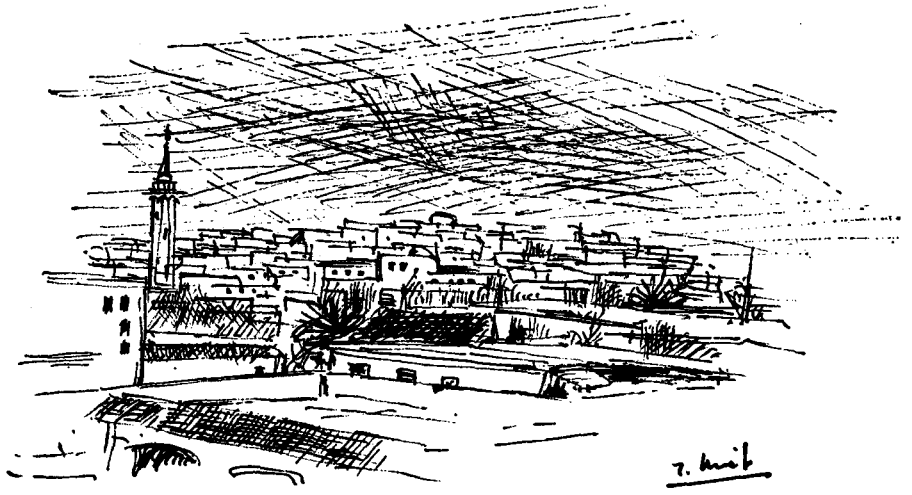

AT HOME & ABROAD

Algeria: A Showdown Is Postponed

CLAIRE STERLING

ALGIERS

EVER SINCE the Second World War, when Charles de Gaulle eloquently offered the Algerian Moslems autonomy in a liberalized French Union, he has remained in their minds as the only French leader honest and courageous enough to understand them. Today many of them think that he still has prestige and strength enough to end the Algerian conflict. "He keeps his promises," an Arab shopkeeper told me simply. "He understands us. He will bring peace." And because leaders of the rebel National Liberation Front (F.L.N.) have felt this as strongly as everyone else—though somewhat less so of late—they have been on the defensive since de Gaulle came to power.

The evidence of this is most striking in Algiers. Two winters ago, the capital was in a state of siege. Terrorists roamed the streets, business was at a standstill, and no European could set foot in the Casbah without risking death. Today, there is scarcely a rifle shot heard in the city from one week's end to another. Business is booming, new buildings are going up everywhere, shops are crammed with luxury goods and customers, and the Casbah is safe again for the tourist.

Algiers is not Algeria, of course, and anyone looking for the war need not go very far to find it. There is not a highway leading out of the capital that can be traveled after dark, and few stretches are comfortable even in broad daylight. On a sixty-mile drive to Ben-Chicao, for instance, I was stopped twelve times by military roadblocks, and required to make the last leg of the journey with a military convoy.

Nevertheless, there are signs everywhere of a slackening in F.L.N. activity. In the hills around Palestro, it is the French patrol that waits nightly in ambush for the rebels now, rather than the other way around. In Constantine, where seven or eight grenades used to explode daily last spring, life has returned almost to normal. In certain zones of the surrounding Constantinois, the French Army once dared not venture with fewer than ten battalions; now it moves with one. And in all five of the F.L.N.'s strongholds—the Tlemcen area, the Oursenis mountain chain, the Kabylie, the Collo Peninsula, the Aurès—the formerly mighty fellagha bands have shrunk noticeably and more often than not refuse combat.

The French attribute this success in part to the Morice Line, a radar-equipped double barrier of electrically charged barbed wire that runs along the Tunisian border and is patrolled by fifty thousand French troops on land and in the air. Since its completion last spring, the rebels' flow of arms from Tunisia has been averaging no more than two small caravans a month, and very few fighters have enjoyed leisurely training on Tunisian soil. As a consequence, the F.L.N. has been forced to put raw recruits into the field with as few as five or six cartridges to a gun, to bury quantities of automatic weapons for lack of ammunition, and to alter its whole military strategy so as to hoard bullets and men.

Yet the Morice Line is not likely to produce the unconditional surrender of the fellagha. Everyone in Algeria knows that they can get fresh troops by forced recruiting, and could probably go on fighting for years with the weapons they can filch from the French Army. The help they need the most comes from the native population: food, shelter, military information. The French say that this assistance is about to be withdrawn if it has not been already.

The Moslems and the Elections

One has a hard time finding F.L.N. resisters in Algiers. Their most authoritative spokesmen have long since either gone to prison or fled to Tunis and Cairo. But outside the capital, in Constantine and Bône, in Palestro and Blida and Médéa, they can be found by the dozen; and they will tell you that neither the Morice Line, nor integration, nor anything else de Gaulle may offer can bring an end to the war until independence is won. "Tired?" a Berber lawyer said to me. "Of course we're tired. Not only have we had to put up with a French occupation army for all these years, but we've had our own not very angelic army as well. Kidnapping, blackmail, killing—we know all about it, and from both sides. But let me tell you,

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if the F.L.N. should call for half a million volunteers tomorrow, it would have them in twenty-four hours."

Assuming this is true, or partly true, there are still large masses of Moslems whose ties with France have not yet been broken. Their acceptance of French rule is by no means unconditional. The Moslems who came—or were summoned—to the Algiers Forum last May were surely not there to cheer Pierre Lagaillarde, the ex-paratrooper who had been notoriously fond of slitting a Moslem belly, "like a melon." And when Lagaillarde led the assault on the Gouvernement Général building on May 13 there were no Moslems around at all. It was only three days later that they came out of the Casbah, with army protection, to cheer for de Gaulle—the honest soldier who respected them, understood them, and offered them—or so many thought—an honorable peace.

Then, when they heard that one of the few Frenchmen in Algiers who stood for the same things, Mayor Jacques Chevallier, was about to be thrown out of office by Lagaillarde's men, they stopped cheering and went back home.

Late in September, they came out again to vote "Yes" for de Gaulle. But while some three hundred reporters can testify that this referendum was an authentic poll of Moslem sentiment, they would agree that the November election was not.

BY THE TIME this election was held, the army was taking no chances. Though de Gaulle had said publicly that he hoped for a truly representative group of Moslem deputies "with whom we will then see how to do the rest," the colonels in the Gouvernement Général were not disposed to leave him with any "rest" to do. Under the watchful eyes of the general's personal electoral representative, Henri Hoppenot, they could not do much to keep dangerous Moslem voters off the register—although only seven thousand got on the rolls out of a population of ninety-two thousand in the F.L.N.-dominated town of El-Milia, and less than a third of Algeria's adult Moslem population actually voted. But they could and did hand-pick the candidates. And with helpful cooperation from the F.L.N., whose boycott of the election kept practically every important native out of the race, they produced a list of 271 Moslem candidates without a single independent among them.

Not all these candidates were *Beni-Oui-Ouis*. It took courage to run in the Kabylie, for instance, where the F.L.N.'s dread Amirouche is inexorable in his vengeance: among the Moslem candidates in that region, there was one whose entire family had been assassinated by the F.L.N., another who had lost nine relatives in the same way, and a third—still carrying an F.L.N. bullet in his neck—who had buried nine members of his family with the epitaph "Killed by the fellagha; Died for France."

Nevertheless, the Moslem candidates were not a distinguished lot. Few of their constituents either knew or much cared whom they were voting for—they were simply rounded up in army trucks and brought to the polls. One cannot help wondering whether Mlle. Nefissa sid Cara, for example, who refers to the French as "us" and to the Moslems as "them," will be speaking for a considerable body of her fellow Moslems in Paris as a secretary of state.

At any rate, these are the Moslem deputies with whom de Gaulle must supposedly "do the rest"; and since they are all unequivocally committed to the principle of integration, his duty is presumably plain. "I am too loyal to de Gaulle," says Alain de Sérigny, the editor of *Echo d'Alger* who for many years was loyal to Pétain, "to believe that he would ignore this mandate from our Moslem fellow citizens—still less that he would betray us all by negotiating with the F.L.N. Algeria is now a department of France. The question is closed."

As de Gaulle well knows, however, it is not. Unlike the *colons* and certain army officers, he has never pretended not to see a massive object standing right in front of him. Though he may not admit that the F.L.N. point of view is legitimate, he recognizes that it exists and that a large if undetermined number of Moslems share it. He must, since he entered into secret negotiations with the F.L.N. shortly after taking office. The negotiations were well advanced last October, when he publicly offered F.L.N. leaders a safe-conduct to Paris for peace talks. But the Algerian press interpreted his reference to the "parliamentarians' white flag" as the flag not of truce but of surrender. So did the F.L.N., which thereupon turned the offer down.

A Five-Year Plan

It is not so easy, of course, to determine what de Gaulle himself had in mind when he issued the invitation. Plainly, however, he did not intend simply to suggest that Algeria should remain an integral part of France. Though he has never implied that France might leave Algeria—"What a hecatomb this land would know," he has said, "if we were so stupid and cowardly as to abandon it!"—he has frequently spoken of an "Algerian personality," and of "Algeria with France and France with Algeria." Not once in all these dramatic months has he pronounced the word "integration," and if the concept was partly implied in his famous Constantine speech on October 3, he and the *colons* are clearly not talking about the same thing.

In Constantine, he called for a five-year plan that would "profound-

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ly transform" Algeria, including the reservation for Moslems of one out of every ten posts in the civil service of metropolitan France; raising of Algerian wages and working conditions to a level comparable to those prevailing there; distribution of 620,000 acres of land to the Moslem fellahin; exploitation of Saharan petroleum and natural gas to create vast metallurgical and chemical complexes; construction of housing for a million people; development of adequate sanitary facilities, ports, and highways; the creation of 400,000 new jobs and enough new schools to absorb two-thirds of Algeria's children, the rest to be absorbed in the following three years.

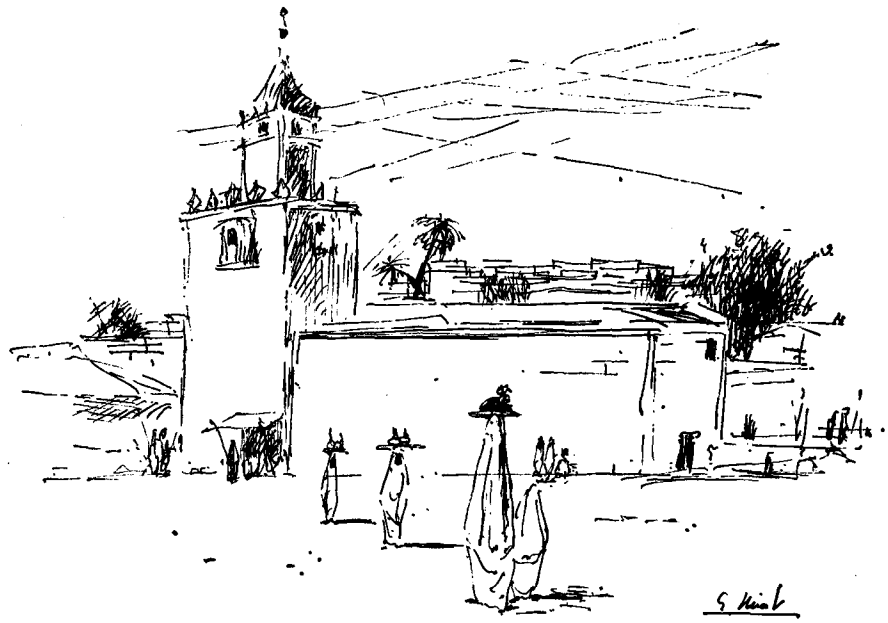
All this would cost 100 billion francs a year for five years—a total of $5 billion; and even after such a monumental expenditure of money and effort, de Gaulle's only promise for the future was that "Algeria's destiny will have as its basis both her own personality and a close solidarity with metropolitan France."

The *colons* of Constantine heard him out in cold silence; and when he started singing the "Marseillaise" at the close of his speech, they left him to sing it through alone.

Can He Control the Army?

De Gaulle's problem at the moment, however, is not so much the *colons* as the army, which is obsessed with maintaining the French "presence" in Algeria as a point of patriotism and pride. From their painful experience in Indo-China, French army officers have learned how to recognize a popular revolution when they see one; and though they may not be masters of Marxist doctrine, they are assiduous students of the psychological-warfare techniques used so successfully by Ho Chi Minh and Mao Tse-tung. "The army," as Mao used often to say, "must move among the people as a fish swims in water." There is hardly a captain or lieutenant in Algeria who doesn't know the maxim.

For two years now, highly trained officers in the army's SAS (*Service d'Administration Spécial*) have been at work in the remotest ends of the Bled, the vast, misery-ridden Algerian hinterland neglected by the *colons* for more than a century. In nearly seven hundred villages, the SAS officer



fills the role of doctor, engineer, teacher, mayor, lawyer, judge. If he does not always win the Moslems' love, at least he earns their respect. In the relatively short time they have been at work, the SAS officers have given free medical care to 673,000 people, established work projects for ten thousand unemployed, rebuilt three hundred schools destroyed by the F.L.N. and added as many more, and resettled nearly 750,000 Moslems who had either sought French protection from the F.L.N. or lived directly in the theater of war.

The SAS men's effort may be futile. "It's a wonderful idea," one of them told me, "but I'm afraid we're ten years too late." Still, it has brought them far closer to the Moslems than the *colons* ever were; and through this intimate contact they have come to believe in integration in the full sense of the word.

Accordingly, the army here is all for de Gaulle's Constantine plan—provided it ends by keeping Algeria as a fully integrated part of France. But that would require an end to the war, and at once. For the war has been costing France a billion dollars a year; and however stringent an austerity program de Gaulle may try to impose, it is highly improbable that he can afford to pay both for pacification and for war. Indeed, Algerian industrialists take this for granted. "Naturally," says the secretary of the Bône chamber of commerce, discussing a multi-million-dollar steel plant projected in the plan, "we can't get started on this until pacification is completed."

There are no signs, however, that pacification is anywhere near attainment. On the contrary. The rebel leaders may be preoccupied by recent military setbacks, they may fear the civilian Moslems' weariness and even share it; yet their reaction is not to call off the fighting but to extend it. "We will give de Gaulle six months to offer us our independence," says a spokesman for the Algerian government-in-exile in Tunis. "And if he doesn't by then, we will bring Tunisia and Morocco into the war. The people are with us. If Bourguiba and King Mohammed V aren't, they'll be pushed."

THIS IS a much more serious threat than others the rebels have used, such as to call in Nasser or the Soviet Union. For Soviet intervention in the Algerian war would bring all the West to France's side, whereas the entrance of Tunisia and Morocco would add immensely to its already colossal burden. Of course this may be a bluff. Bourguiba can hardly feel much enthusiasm for the idea: if the French army should spill over into Tunisia, he has no more than five thousand poorly equipped troops to send against it. Yet feelings have been running high in his country since the French bombed the Tunisian village of Sakiet-Sidi-Youssef last February. One more incident like it might be the final push that's needed.

Some French officers would like

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nothing better than another Sakiet, including the commander of the airfield from which the bombers took off last February. This does not apply, however, to the top army men in Algiers. "The F.L.N. mustn't believe in Santa Claus," one of them told me. "Our strategy isn't to give the fellagha more room to fight in but to squeeze them until they have no room left."

Still, for more than four years now, a French army half a million strong has been hunting down a guerrilla army ten times smaller; and anyone who travels through the Oursenis mountain chain, the Kabylie, or the Aurès can see that the rebels still have plenty of room. Whatever the optimism in Algiers, there are no realistic grounds for assuming that de Gaulle has any but two choices: either to go on fighting the war for another year or two or ten or to find some basis for resuming negotiations with the F.L.N. If he chooses the latter course, however, he must first find a way to break the army's power.

THERE ARE French officers here who would support de Gaulle whatever he did. "I'd follow him with my eyes closed," said a colonel in the air force, "and if the *colons* didn't like wherever he was going, I can think of a good place to send them." But there are not many like him in the Gouvernement Général. The famous colonels who have made one revolution and can make another insist that they have been "negotiated out of the last piece of French territory we're ever going to leave." They want no more Indo-Chinas or Tunisias or Moroccos. "*J'y suis; j'y reste.*" No group of French officers was ever more determined to stand fast.

In the end it may turn out that they are no match for de Gaulle, who has been prying them out of Algiers, one by one, almost from the day they put him in power. When the last and biggest to go, General Raoul Salan, took off for Paris, Algiers was silent and sullen, and there was not a single important personage present at the airport to greet his civilian successor, Paul Delouvrier. But apart from a few hardy souls who shouted "Down with de Gaulle!," the *Algérois* did not show any inclination to go on a rampage against de Gaulle.

Europe Looks The Dollar in the Face

PAUL BAREAU

LONDON

ON MONDAY, December 29, 1958, ten countries of western Europe made the greatest collective move toward freedom of payments since exchange controls were clamped down when war broke out in 1939. They decided to make other currencies freely convertible, not merely among one another but with the dollar; in most cases, however, convertibility will be restricted to people not residing in the country that issues the currency in question.

The pound sterling was made convertible for anyone residing outside the United Kingdom and other sterling countries. The French franc in its newly devalued form was made convertible for those outside

the Netherlands—and so on with the other seven countries involved in the December 29 announcement: Switzerland, Italy, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and West Germany. (The latter, however, has promised that the mark will soon be freely convertible for German citizens as well as foreigners.) Austria and Portugal got on the band wagon a few days later. Unlike charity, convertibility in Europe has not begun at home. But when so many countries are distributing this particular largesse on their neighbors, each one will in fact get the benefit of all the others' concessions.

This move into partial convertibility is important in itself, because it extends the mutual convertibility among European countries to convertibility with the dollar. It will help do away with the specter of an economically insulated Europe that might become increasingly inward-looking and discriminatory in its trade with the dollar world. The fear had increased recently with the discussions on linking the Common Market with a Free Trade Area. The Common Market of France, West Germany, Italy, and the three Benelux nations, which came into effect on January 1, had begun to acquire a protectionist philosophy and might well have become an expression in economic terms of the desire for political neutralism cherished by many Europeans. Nothing would have been more dangerous to the free world. The new convertibility of European currencies, even though reserved to nonresidents, goes a very long way toward removing the menace of economic division.

BUT THE MOVE is also important because it is a genuinely collective effort. The effort is all the more remarkable in that there had been evidence that western Europe might split into two camps—the six of the Common Market against the rest. The attempts to associate them all in a Free Trade Area had come to grief at a meeting in Paris on December 15 that ended in what was probably the most angry and open clash between France and Britain that has occurred at any postwar international conference. Now we see sterling and the franc moving together into convertibility and, most significant of all, the Bank of England offering considerable help to the Bank of France in order to buttress the new revalued franc. After that evidence of collaboration, the fears of an economic division in western Europe were considerably diminished.

The background of these decisions is provided by the tremendous im-

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provement in the European economic situation in the past two or three years, particularly in the strengthening of Europe's hard-currency reserves during 1958. The chronic fear of a dollar shortage has disappeared. There simply is no dollar gap in the world today. When the late Lord Keynes, in his last published work, prophesied that in the postwar world there would be no shortage of dollars, he was laughed to scorn. But his prophecies have come true—though twelve years later—and for precisely the reason he gave: namely, that the United States in due course would become a high-cost, high-price country, and that it would continue to pour out capital to the rest of the world. By 1958 the United States did in fact show clear signs of pricing itself out of world markets.

This fact, plus the substantial increase in the productive power of European industry, helps to explain the massive shift of gold from the United States to Europe that has been one of the most remarkable phenomena of 1958. This strengthening of European reserves and the promise of still further reinforcements from the increased resources of the International Monetary Fund provide the basis for confidence and financial strength.

THEY DO NOT, however, explain the precise timing of the convertibility announcement. This must be found in the devaluation of the French franc. France had reached a desperate financial position when General de Gaulle was called to power. The franc was overvalued; the official gold reserves were practically exhausted. The general is no financial expert, but he has the intelligence to appreciate good advice. One such piece of advice was that the only hope of ensuring political stability for the Fifth Republic was to restore the monetary stability France had lacked since 1914. Since that year France has undergone no fewer than twelve successive devaluations, each of which has in turn been wasted and frittered away by allowing inflation to continue unchecked.

General de Gaulle's experts decided that in order to make certain of the thirteenth devaluation, a unit would have to be introduced equal to a hundred of the new devalued francs, if only to give the French currency the kind of parity that is consonant with the dignity of a great nation. But much more was wanted than a new unit: the franc had to be given the virtue and strength of a convertible currency.

All these reforms had to be introduced before January 1, 1959, the

opening day for the Common Market. French costs and prices had to be brought into some semblance of equilibrium with those of France's partners in the Common Market; hence the seventeen per cent devaluation. The omens for this thirteenth devaluation are not bad, if only because the new government will unquestionably make a serious attempt to balance the budget, stop inflation, and prevent the leapfrogging of wages and prices.

Four Kinds of Sterling

The shape of these latest events can best be described in terms of sterling because, of all the European currencies that moved to this status of partial convertibility on December 29, sterling is by far the most important. There had already been a very substantial dismantling of the sterling-exchange control that had been imposed at the beginning of the Second World War. This control had produced a number of different kinds of sterling—the "fifty-seven varieties," as they were at one time described—which prior to the latest developments had been reduced to only four.

The first kind was resident sterling, or currency held by people living in Britain or elsewhere in the sterling area. This kind of sterling remains entirely unaffected by the latest move into convertibility. We in Britain are still limited in the amount we can spend on our travels abroad. When we earn foreign currencies, we are required to put them at the disposal of the Bank of England and take payment in sterling. We are not allowed to send money abroad, except with the permission of the Treasury. There are still restrictions on imported goods, and those restrictions apply with special severity against goods from the dollar world. But the latest extension of convertibility to nonresident sterling is a sign of strength and confidence that seems to promise further concessions to residents in the near future.

THE OTHER THREE VARIETIES of sterling were the "American account," the "transferable," and the "security." American-account sterling consisted of dollars deposited in the sterling area by nonresidents, and these dollars, which preferred to be deposited and counted in pounds, retained the virtue of the dollar, and could be fully converted in the official market. The other two kinds of sterling were characterized in varying degrees by a certain unofficial or bootleg quality.

Transferable-account sterling was that earned in the normal course of trade by people in all countries outside the dollar or sterling areas. Although it was not officially convertible, there was a very active market in it, operated mainly in New York and Zürich. In those markets, Germans, Russians, Argentines, Netherlanders, and others who had acquired sterling could convert it into dollars at rates that in recent years have been close to those quoted in the official market.

The main effect of the December 29 decisions was to convert all American-account and transferable-account sterling into "external accounts," between which money can be freely moved and the proceeds of which can be converted into dollars in the official market. One of the results is that the foreign markets in sterling will dwindle in importance and the real market in sterling will come more and more to be concen-

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trated in London, where it will be under the weather eye of the Bank of England.

The last of the three types of nonresident sterling, security sterling, represents earlier investments of capital from outside Britain. It was not the result of trade or related to trade; rather it was a transfer of capital into sterling. It remains legally inconvertible, but in fact it can be disposed of at a rate which in the last few days has been as high as that for official sterling.

For the nonresident, then, all types of sterling are now convertible. They have in fact been convertible, though at slightly different rates, for some time. This fact has now been legally recognized.

Good News for Yankee Traders?

These moves bring promise of a considerable easement in imports of dollar goods into Europe, and particularly into Britain. The case for discrimination against dollar goods has now gone overboard. If West Germany can get convertible sterling and therefore dollars when it sells automobiles to Britain, there is no argument to support any continued restriction on the import of American cars to Britain. The logical conclusion of these exchange moves must be a further removal of import controls. Moreover, the steps toward convertibility should encourage American capital to come to Europe. Investors can now have assurance that their profits can be brought back home without restrictions.

A further encouragement to American investment in Europe may be provided by the help that the recent moves, including the devaluation of the franc, will give to the formation of a Free Trade Area in Europe. Discussions of this project have in the past been wrecked on the rock of French hostility, itself created by the fact that French industry felt it could not compete on equal terms in a free-trade system. After its devaluation by seventeen per cent, the franc is now more realistically priced and these fears should disappear. If, as a result, the Common Market can be joined by the other countries of Europe in a Free Trade Area, western Europe will have the kind of mass market to which American techniques and ideas are attuned, and this market should attract more American capital to the eastern side of the Atlantic.

BUT WILL Europe's currencies and reserves be strong enough to stand the possible added strains that will be put on them now that they have acquired partial convertibility? The immediate response of the markets, and particularly of the market in sterling, was reassuring on this point. But this experiment is not to be judged in terms of immediate results; and there can be no doubt that the extension of convertibility to sterling and other European currencies must make them somewhat more vulnerable to pressure, if and when such pressure arises. The "hot" money that has been coming to London may disappear rapidly when the specter of the next general election conjures up possibilities of a Socialist government. It is not surprising that although the Labour Party politicians have criticized the decision of the Conservative government, they have been very careful to point out that if they were to come to power they would not necessarily undo what has been done.

Convertible sterling is bound to be more vulnerable than inconvertible, but only in the sense that a banker becomes more vulnerable when his clientele and his deposits increase. If Britain pursues a financial policy that keeps inflation at bay and maintains honest money at home, there is no reason to fear that the pound sterling will not be able to stand up to the responsibilities of its extended convertibility.

The same warning, of course, applies to all other European currencies that have joined in this collective move—particularly to the French. The only hope of ensuring the success of what has become an all too familiar exercise in devaluation rests in the ability of General de Gaulle and his government to keep down costs and prices, to avoid social strife and labor disputes, to settle the North African adventures that in recent years have drained the French budget and the reserves of the Bank of France. To ask that all these conditions be fulfilled is to ask a great deal. And yet if this thirteenth devaluation of the franc goes the way of its predecessors, the gradual inflation from which the French currency has been suffering for more than forty years might break into a gallop, and could overwhelm the French franc with the fate that has twice struck the German mark during this period —that of complete obliteration.

It is, however, far too early to cry havoc in this manner. France is now enjoying its first strong government since that of Raymond Poincaré. De Gaulle and his financial advisers must be given the benefit of the doubt. They may yet pull off a miracle.

THE FINAL VERDICT on this collective European move into currency convertibility is that it marks the end of the period of postwar reconstruction and the return to something like normality. It reflects the surging revival that in recent years has carried industrial production in western Europe to record levels. It has been made possible by a general return to sound monetary policies. It should remove once and for all the fear that western Europe might find its new way of economic life in a setting of isolationism, protectionism, and discrimination. Here is a token of the effort being made by Europe to live on terms of equal trading opportunities with all nations, and particularly with the dollar world. For the United States this is a visible reward for the economic assistance that has been poured into Europe since the end of the war through the Marshall Plan and in many other ways. That was an investment in freedom. It looks as if it were paying off.

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The Bitter Fruits Of Southern Bitter-Endism

DOUGLASS CATER

TO ANYONE born and reared in the South, there was a perceptible change in the atmosphere when Harrell Hammonds, the lanky probate judge of Lowndes County, took the witness stand during last month's Civil Rights Commission hearings in Montgomery, Alabama. It was not so much what he said, for in fact he spoke very little and with obvious reluctance. Certainly he displayed no more open hostility than some of the other officials subpoenaed to testify about alleged discrimination against the Negro in voter registration. But his whole manner conveyed an uncomprehending wonderment at the turn of events that permitted a Negro to question *his* official conduct. He had difficulty accommodating himself to the change. When J. Ernest Wilkins, the Negro commission member, asked if it wasn't "unusual or peculiar" that not a single Negro was registered to vote in Lowndes County, where Negroes outnumber whites about four to one, Judge Hammonds replied after a sullen pause, "It might seem unusual or peculiar some places."

Those who choose to lump the South into a single entity for good or evil fail to take into account the peculiarities that differentiate one city from the next, one county from its neighbor. The official of Atlanta, where proportionately about as many Negroes as whites vote, does not find it peculiar to have a Negro on the board of education or a mayor who, defying the governor, has openly proposed local option on the matter of school desegregation. The public official of Montgomery, Alabama, where the persevering Negro usually gets to vote, does not follow the civic practices of the official of Macon County, Alabama, where Negro voting is a strictly rationed affair, or of Bullock County, Alabama, where a Negro applicant testified that he was told to "get the hell" out of the registration office. And the officials of Macon and Bullock, though they may envy, do not emulate the procedures in Lowndes County, where, according to the sworn testimony of its registrars, no Negro has even tried to become a voter—ever.

Now the Civil Rights Commission had come to explore these dead ends of Southern recalcitrance. Nobody expected the commission to find out anything everybody didn't already know. For years the statistics of white and Negro voting, carefully compiled and published by the biracial Southern Regional Council, have offered clear proof of discrimination. But the commission would be able to document and, more important, dramatize individual cases that together would furnish a "pattern" of registration practices.

THE DECISION of Alabama's Attorney General John Patterson, who is also the governor-elect, to defy the commission's authority only served to heighten the publicity value of its hearings. The small chamber of the Federal Court of Appeals, bright with floodlights and crowded with banks of television cameras, a battery of seven microphones massed before the witness chair, and the tightly packed tables of visiting correspondents, provided evidence that this was to be a major news story.

Considering the delicacy of their mission, the commissioners handled their strategy with consummate skill. It was difficult for the hatemongers to muster a case against a group that included former governors of Virginia and Florida. They entered town quietly, avoiding the embarrassment of local hotel segregation by seeking accommodation at Maxwell Air Force Base, on the city's outskirts. Appearing cheerfully unperturbed by Attorney General Patterson's plans to greet them with a "wall of silence," Chairman John A. Hannah, president of Michigan State University, and Vice-Chairman Robert G. Storey, dean of Southern Methodist Law School, called a press conference the evening before the hearings to voice hope that the

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subpoenaed officials would appear and produce their records.

In his opening statement on December 8, Dean Storey spoke over the heads of the waiting Negro witnesses directly to Attorney General Patterson, who stood in the doorway with arms folded. Recalling his own Confederate ancestral ties to Alabama, Storey declared firmly, "This is a difficult assignment, at least for me, because it is raising fundamental questions about the political processes of my own region. . . . But history moves on, we are one nation now." During the tense moments that ensued, Storey showed no inclination to back away from history.

THE COMMISSION had made sure that the defiance of voting officials would not leave them without any business. The first morning, a succession of Negroes marched to the stand to describe their frustrated attempts to gain the franchise. Many of them were faculty members at Tuskegee Institute, holding advanced degrees from Boston University, Iowa State, and other recognized institutions of higher learning. They had met both the literacy and the property requirements of the state law. Each had obtained the necessary "voucher" to attest to his fitness. Each had dutifully copied in longhand whole articles of the Constitution at the behest of the registrars, sometimes going through the laborious process two and three times. Yet each had somehow failed to qualify, learning of his failure only when a registration notice did not arrive or by casual word of mouth from a registrar who claimed that it was against the rules to specify the applicant's mistakes.

The Negroes testified quietly and stoically, recalling precise dates and particular circumstances related to each registration effort. From time to time, one of the members of the distinguished commission, the Reverend Theodore M. Hesburgh, president of Notre Dame, would put the blunt question, "Why do you want to vote?" One Negro woman answered simply, "Because I am a law-abiding citizen." A young man argued that citizenship, which had already required his military service in Korea, should also include the right to vote. Several argued that as property owners and taxpayers they had vested interests that needed looking after. As each witness made a telling point, there were murmurs of "That's right" and nudges of self-congratulation among the Negroes in the courtroom.

The rising prosperity of the new South was readily apparent among these Negroes. One patriarch gave evidence of the mighty revolution that economics is working even in the remote fastness of the Black Belt. A small farm owner who had taught himself to read, he testified that he had put four daughters through high school and now had two granddaughters in college.

In many ways, the untutored witnesses, mostly cotton and peanut farmers, were the most effective advocates. In their faces there were lines of strength and durability. They described their predicament with raw ungrammatical eloquence mixed with a wry humor. As a Tuskegee professor declared afterward, "They were the ones with real courage. That fellow from Bullock County, for example, lives out of sight of his nearest neighbor. It took guts for him to get up there on the witness stand."

The Dubious Battle

By contrast, the voting officials, despite their pretension to a counter-strategy, seemed confused and divided. One of them, Circuit Judge George C. Wallace of Clayton County, simply refused to appear. Several were willing to be sworn, while a number of others declined. Most balked at testifying about their official business, but three, the Macon County probate judge and two Lowndes County registrars, yielded to the commission's mandate. Many of them seemed to have grave doubts about the Alabama attorney general's plea that the commission's hearings represented an invasion by the legislative branch of government into the judicial—an unusual counterpoint to the frequent Southern complaint that the Federal judiciary has been usurping the role of the legislature.

By and large, the Negroes seemed composed, forthright, and dignified. The white witnesses seemed truculent, evasive, and deceitful. Some of the officials displayed intellectual and educational limitations that cast a strange light on their roles as guardians of the voter lists. One registrar, despite the repeated promptings of the attorney general, could not remember his grounds for refusing to testify. Evidently having watched too many televised Congressional investigations, he at last blurted out the familiar "It might tend to incriminate me." Only after further whispered consultation did he get his argument straight.

After such a day of testimony, it was possible to understand the anguish voiced by former Governor John S. Battle of Virginia, a commission member who claimed Alabama ancestry in addition to a strong belief in segregation as the "right and proper way of life." Battle argued almost tearfully, "It is from this background that I am constrained to say, in all friendliness, that I fear the officials of Alabama and of certain of its counties have made a grievous error in attempting to cover up their actions in relation to the exercise of the voting rights. The majority of the members of the next Congress will not be sympathetic to the South, and punitive legislation may be passed which will be disastrous to the way of life of us in Virginia and you in Alabama."

Governor Battle's appeal to reconsider was promptly rejected. The thirty-seven-year-old future governor of Alabama announced that "The time for retreating has come to an end," and then added reassuringly, "I know this to be a fact. The records of the boards of registrars and probate judges are in order, and all citizens both black and white have been treated fairly, justly, and impartially by our public officials." Next day, the commissioners voted without dissent to refer the record to the U.S. Justice Department. The battle of litigation began. On January 5 Federal District Judge Frank M. Johnson ordered three counties to produce their records, and Patterson yielded.

Tension in Tuskegee

Macon County, which supplied the most witnesses for the commission's inquiry, provides a grim example of the bitter fruits of bitter-endism.

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Going back a long time, the ruling groups in Tuskegee, its county seat, have maintained a heels-dug-in attitude toward change—any sort of change. No inducements were ever offered to outside business to settle there. Tuskegee managed to be bypassed by the main railroad line, which might have been a link with both Montgomery and Atlanta. Only a spur line from the little junction at Chehaw disturbed the town's isolation in the years before the highway came through.

Yet, in this remote wilderness a Negro educator named Booker T. Washington founded in 1881 a little school for teacher training and industrial education of Negroes. Starting with thirty students straight out of the cotton fields, Tuskegee Institute grew into a center of higher learning whose student body numbers two thousand, and whose name is famous the world over. Its faculty constitutes the most highly educated group in a town of less than ten thousand. Its annual budget of nearly $4 million, along with the payroll of the predominantly Negro Veterans Hospital that came along in 1922, is the major economic force in the community, removing the Negro from financial dependence on the white.

Nearly twenty per cent of the town's Negroes who are twenty-five years old or over have at least a high-school education—more than twice the ratio in any other Alabama county. In Tuskegee 4.5 per cent of the Negro wage earners have incomes of more than $5,000 compared to a national average for the Negro of 0.2 per cent. As one study of the community noted, "Macon County . . . is certainly atypical . . . in the proportion of [Negro] persons engaged in middle class occupations with middle class incomes and levels of education."

Mr. Washington's Optimism

The history of relations between Negro and white in Tuskegee throws much light on the Southern situation. In the beginning there was much good will between the races. As Booker T. Washington records in his autobiography, *Up From Slavery*, the joint efforts of a former slaveholder and a former slave gave birth to the Institute and secured the state appropriation to help pay

its teachers' salaries. The white people of the community shared a common pride in the Institute and its renowned founder. In both South and North, white people joined in praise of the Negro leader's famous address at the Cotton States Exposition held at Atlanta in 1895 in which he set forth a pattern of future race relations: "In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress."

EVEN WHEN the post-Reconstruction reaction set in throughout the South, sweeping Negro voters off the registration lists and Negro politicians out of office, Booker T. Washington maintained an onward-and-upward attitude toward race relations. But as Tuskegee Institute gradually expanded from a rudimentary vocational school for illiterates into an accredited "A"-grade college for technical and professional training, his successors rankled under customs he had found acceptable. Ralph Ellison, once a student at Tuskegee, in his novel *The Invisible Man* makes a biting attack on the head of a thinly disguised Negro college who holds power by currying the favor of the white man.

For years the white people of the community had attended school chapel services, sitting in the section reserved for their race. During the 1930's, this segregation bar was removed and the white people quit coming. There was growing estrangement as the educated Negroes became less and less reconciled to a way of life that to them connoted inferiority, while the white people balked at granting status to the rising Negro middle class.

Officially, the Institute has no relationship with the Tuskegee Civic Association, which serves as the political-action group for the Negro. In fact, however, professors from the Institute have taken the lead in T.C.A.'s endeavors, more and more finding common cause with the uneducated Negroes from the surrounding countryside as the conflict between the two races has sharpened. Starting in the 1940's, T.C.A. instituted an incessant battle in the registration office and the courts to boost the number of Negro voters. To date, the totals have reached 1,100, which is less than eight per cent of the Negro population of Macon County. It amounts to approximately one-third of the white voting list in a county where the Negro makes up 84.4 per cent of the population.

Every manner of nonviolent obstacle has been set in the way of the Negro voting applicant. Boards of registrars have vanished with monotonous regularity, sometimes convening and disappearing before the Negro community had become aware of their existence. Attempts to correct the situation by legal means have been bogged down in legal maneuvering. A suit on behalf of William P. Mitchell, chairman of T.C.A.'s franchise committee, consumed two years of appeal through Federal District and Appellate courts to the Supreme Court, only to be dismissed when the registration board suddenly "discovered" that Mitchell had been registered four years earlier. One analysis prepared by T.C.A. concluded: "At the present rate of issuing certificates to Negroes, it would require 203 years to register the approximately 13,000 unregistered Negroes in Macon County that are now 21 years of age and older."

The Eye of the Storm

As the struggle has persisted, it has evoked ever more extremist measures from white politicians. Macon County's state senator, Sam Engelhardt, Jr., became executive secretary and master strategist of the Alabama [White] Citizens' Councils. Engelhardt, who comes from the planter community outside Tuskegee, has been given practically a free hand by the state legislature to decide the

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future and possibly even the demise of his county. In June, 1957, his bill reshaping the Tuskegee town boundaries and excluding all but ten of its 420 Negro voters was adopted by the legislators as a "local privilege" measure. That same fall, not long after Congress passed the Civil Rights bill, a state-wide referendum authorized a fourteen-man legislative committee presided over by Engelhardt to consider the partition of Macon County among the neighboring counties.

Retaliatory measures have not been confined to the whites. Only a few days after the passage of the Tuskegee gerrymander, there was a mass meeting sponsored by the T.C.A. Next day, the Negroes began a boycott of the town's white merchants that hardened into a chronic civic condition. Now, a year and a half later, the shift to the newly established Negro merchants and the impoverishment of the white ones appears to be permanent.

Tuskegee Institute has not been damaged in the battle so far. Recently Senator Engelhardt threatened to oppose state appropriations that make up an important but not indispensable fifth of its teaching budget. In reply, T.C.A. leaders threaten to turn their attention to school-integration proposals, which up to now they have neglected.

A study produced for the Anti-Defamation League by two faculty members of the Institute, Lewis Jones and Stanley Smith, takes note of the curious calm of the Tuskegee situation as it grinds toward seemingly ineluctable tragedy. "City and county officials have been careful to be courteous and respectful in their contacts throughout the controversy. Negroes have been equally courteous and respectful in such contacts," Smith and Jones report. Yet, they point out, the struggle has been a failure on both sides—failure of the white man to preserve his economic status and failure of the Negro to gain his voting rights. They conclude pessimistically, "The current stalemate, with all its destructive effect upon the community, will apparently be lifted only when some formula for a new adjustment is presented. But the intransigence of the Negroes and whites would indicate that the likelihood of this seems to be remote."

It is disturbing for one born in the South to return on a reporting mission. To drive across the pecan-grove plains of eastern Alabama to Tuskegee is to enter a beleaguered town. Eleven shopping days before Christmas, the streets about Courthouse Square were practically deserted, the empty stores decorated with a macabre holiday gaiety.

Tuskegee is only an especially dramatic example of the enervating struggle that threatens to drag the people of a whole region to their knees. As disturbing as the clash of race against race are the signs of a ruthless regimentation of public attitudes among members of the same race. Close friends who once argued heatedly about what should be done in the South now preserve a tight-lipped silence. Passive before the oft-repeated shibboleth of "This is war," no white man dares to propose an alternative strategy to that of the bitter-enders.

It Wasn't My Volkswagen

Everyone is caught in a ruthless drive toward conformism on racial matters. A group of churchwomen of three faiths and two races met at the Catholic Hospital of St. Jude outside Montgomery in what they called a Fellowship of the Concerned. Not caring what they were concerned about, a reporter for a Montgomery weekly copied down the license-plate numbers of the cars parked outside the building and published the names of what he believed to be the owners. This anguished disclaimer of one husband, along with others, appeared on the front page of a later issue:

"First, this is my belief and my practice unequivocally; I am an ardent supporter of segregation and the continuation of our Southern way of life. My wife, Jeanette, shares the same opinions and subscribes to no other doctrine.

"Second, the Volkswagen car bearing tag number 322303, seen at this reported meeting, was sold by me in March of 1958. In addition, the car has been sold several times, subsequently.

"Third, and important to me, this erroneous report has affected my business, at the Tip Top Barber Shop where I work. I will appreciate publication of this statement so that my friends will know the truth."

The path of racial progress has never been clearly marked in the South. But at least there has been a faith that a path did exist which rational men of both races could make out as they moved ahead. Booker T. Washington's optimism affected a great many Southerners long after his death in 1915. Even the grim analysis made by Gunnar Myrdal in 1942, which aroused the wrath of many white Southerners, contained the seeds of faith in a future that could be "socially engineered." It is interesting a decade and a half later to review *An American Dilemma*. In it Myrdal outlined a "Rank Order of Discriminations" and reached the conclusion that "The Negro resists least the discrimination on the ranks placed highest in the white man's evaluation and resists most any discrimination on the lowest level." Myrdal considered this inverse scale of priorities between the Negro's desires and the white man's antagonisms of "strategical importance in the practical and political sphere of the Negro problem." There seemed to be a natural order of things that pointed toward progress.

It hasn't worked that way. Starting at the bottom of Myrdal's hierarchy of discrimination, there has been substantial achievement in eliminating category No. 6—discrimination in securing land, credit, means of earning a living, etc.—and No. 5—discrimination by the law courts, the police, and other public officials. Then, in 1954, the Supreme Court jumped over No. 4—political disenfranchisement—to attack No. 3—segregation of public facilities such as schools.

Whatever the necessity of the court's timing, the decision constituted a strategic breakthrough on a major front that threw the whole line of battle out of balance. The Negro in the South had won a sweeping victory before he had even begun to acquire the political strength in his own region to sustain it.

How was the situation allowed to reach the present impasse? A good many thoughtful observers are coming to realize that the effort to

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eliminate racial discrimination—even its merely legal manifestations—stirs far deeper impulses in our society than had been expected. It has been too easy to put all of the blame on either an unreconstructed South or a meddling North. The blame needs to be shared by all those who failed to foresee and get ready for this effort to root out ancient fears and alter a way of life.

With few exceptions, universities and foundations have been notably reluctant to tackle projects in the field. Myrdal, whose study was one such exception, declared scathingly, "The simple fact is that an educational offensive against racial intolerance, going deeper than the reiteration of the 'glittering generalities' in the nation's political creed, has never seriously been attempted in America." The Southern Regional Council, a hopeful but pathetically small effort at biracial co-operation in the South, was for years nursed along by hand-to-mouth contributions. Most of its foundation assistance has been on a declining-grant basis, reflecting the pious expectation that its job could be completed or made self-sustaining in a matter of two or three years. One S.R.C. officer has remarked caustically of the philanthropists, "What they're looking for is a project nobody ever thought of before, everybody agrees needs doing, and your local banker endorses."

The Southern Education Reporting Service, set up after the Supreme Court decision under a grant from the Ford Fund for the Advancement of Education, has proved a highly useful check against irresponsible news in the desegregation controversy. And the fund-sponsored study *The Negro and the Schools,* published the very day of the Supreme Court's decision on that subject, provided a badly needed textbook of basic information. But not much more has been done.

Organizations that cut across regional barriers—business and professional groups, labor unions, and other service organizations—have notably failed to live up to the challenge. Finally, there has been a failure at the White House to call a single conference of regional leaders of the two races to try to prevent the total breakdown of communication between them.

What of the Other Ninety-Nine?

Can an orderly line of progress for the South be discovered? A start at least would be for each of those engaged in the present struggle to realize the uses and limitations of the weapons with which he fights.

The Southern white man has massive weapons for stalling and delay. But he knows he lacks an ultimate weapon. Harry Ashmore has ridiculed the notion of his "fellow townsmen lining up in double rank while the chairman of the local White Citizens' Council checks their bandoliers in preparation for a second march to turn back the Federals at Pea Ridge." It is equally farfetched to imagine the white citizens of the South taking to the hills for extended guerrilla warfare. The South is still overwhelmingly their land—their homes, their businesses, their institutions. By bitter-endism, as the experience of Little Rock and Tuskegee has shown, they can only hurt themselves.

The Southern Negro, despite his impressive victories in court, should also give thought to the limitations of a legal victory that may turn out to be more symbolic than real. Thurgood Marshall, the most brilliant of the Negro courtroom pioneers, once stated his aim to a reporter for the *New Yorker:* "If ninety-nine Negro children out of a hundred should be found to be stupid, that hundredth one still has a right to equal educational opportunities. All I'm saying is this, and it really says just about everything I have to say on civil rights. Any tests the school wishes to give the children to separate them for one reason or another are O.K. with me except for one test—the racial test. That's all it comes down to. Not the racial test." It is possible to sympathize with Marshall's concern for that hundredth child and still to realize that in the South it must be accompanied by an acceptance of the heavy burden of bringing along the ninety-nine.

THE RECENT Supreme Court decision upholding the Alabama Pupil Placement Law, at least for the present, raises the prospect that token integration may meet the Court's requirements. But, even if the Deep South yielded this much, there could be danger for both races in this development. Cynically applied, pupil placement could be used to cultivate an educational aristocracy which, mainly prejudicial to the Negro, might also work a hardship on great numbers of underprivileged white children. A handful of Negro children in white schools may satisfy the Supreme Court and Thurgood Marshall, but no one should forget—as the concentration on legalistic battles and legalistic triumphs tempts us to forget—that the South's continuing problem remains the improvement of its whole public-school system.

To accomplish this requires an intensified fight for the franchise by Negro and white alike. Only when both can speak and be heard in the hard, often bitter bargaining that must be done in their own community will there be lasting progress.

As Booker T. Washington prophesied exactly sixty years ago, "Any law controlling the ballot that is not absolutely just and fair to both races, will work more permanent injury to the whites than to the blacks . . . study the history of the South, and you will find that where there has been the most dishonesty in the matter of voting, there you will find today the lowest moral condition of both races."

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VIEWS & REVIEWS

St.-John Perse: The Re-creation of the World

H. J. KAPLAN

MANY MONTHS have passed since the appearance in this country of St.-John Perse's *Amers,* or *Seamarks,* in a large, handsomely printed edition, with the French text preceding Wallace Fowlie's courageous attempt at translation. (Bollingen Series LXVII, Pantheon, $6.) This, like everything published by Perse since *Eloges,* is a work of almost stupefying ambition—which perhaps explains (together with the poet's apparent difficulty, his exotic rhetoric, and what for lack of a better term we must call his great distance) why we have heard no hosannas or cymbals clashing. I can think of no contemporary work of poetry that more literally calls for celebration; yet the *Readers' Guide* lists only a few reviews thus far. Is it that there is something in the style of our lives which shrinks in embarrassment from so grand a manner? In the shadow of this monument one imagines the critics seized by a furious bibliophilia or tempted to discourse on the Problem of Translation—in short, fascinated by every available side issue.

And so am I. Perse is like the Himalayas, immensely visible and famous but practically unexplored. We cannot all be equipped with expanded lungs like those Peruvian Indians or Tibetan Sherpas (or Edmund Wilson, for that matter); we explore as we can. The side issues can at least be dealt with lightheartedly, and there may be no better way for our bureaucratized, overworked, and politics-haunted contemporaries to approach this delectable mountain.

LET US BEGIN, then, by objecting to the physical enormity of this tome, being (as Perse might say) prone to read in the mystic posture of the Gisants; and suffering from tennis elbow; and bereft of the curiously wrought cocobolowood lectern with its cuneiform balusters and its odor of equinoctial incense, destroyed by fire in the sacrifice of the ancestral ramparts during the year of the plague of the First Born and the Uprising of the Artisans. To this I would add, having chained the purple stallions of parody to the great iron rings of the Servants' Gate, that Pantheon would have been better advised to print Mr. Fowlie's English text on pages facing the French, instead of relegating them to the back of the book. This, without disturbing Mr. Fowlie's readers, would have been a boon to those who prefer to read Perse in his own language, using the English translation for a pony. A small boon, to be sure, since no pony can give us a general view of this forest, which is obscured from us by something more foreign—tantalizing and intentional—than the French language; and the translator would betray his text if he made the equivalents of words like *buccin, Dagon, madrépore, plèvre,* and *bruant* immediately accessible in English. Nevertheless, it would be ungracious to look this gift quadruped in the mouth. I found it useful, if only because it spared me many trips to my bulky Littré, or sent me to Webster instead; and often suggestive, as any serious translation would be.

Of what? Of etymologies, allusions, echoes, prolongations in other languages—and perhaps this explains why Perse, for all his famous hermetism, is one of the most widely translated of modern poets. He seems to require translation, like a hieroglyphic discovered in a tomb; and, to begin with, he himself frequently sounds translated or paraphrased, hovering on the verge of the final transposition, retaining some faint, ineradicable flavor of an unknown but soon to be identified tongue. This is the providential document that will give us The Key. We find this effect in lesser works, of course; and one thinks of Perse's earliest translators who seem to have "caught" it from him—of MacLeish's *Conquistador,* for example, or of Eliot's *"In the juvenescence of the year/Came Christ the Tiger."*

But in St.-John Perse the effect is not merely technical. It springs from the poet's essential project, his *propos,* what he is about.

THIS IS STATED, insofar as it can be, perhaps more explicitly in *Seamarks* than elsewhere in Perse's work. In the sight of the sea, the tragediennes—predestined interpreters of man's past, his rites, and his dreams—lay down, "as on the approaches to the temples, our trappings of the stage and our accoutre-

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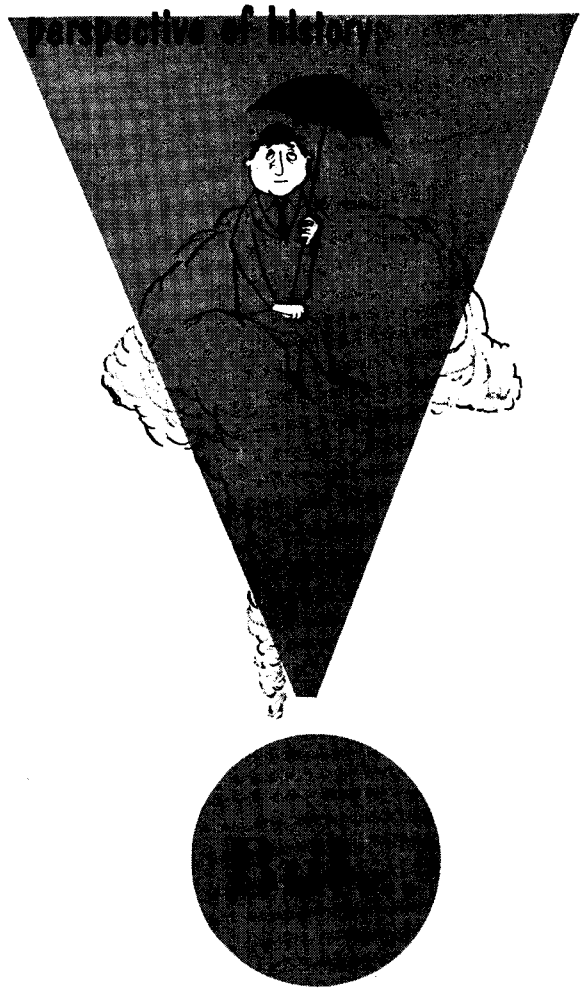
Some people ask the man on the street:

Some people wait for the perspective of history:



Some people only what has been [illegible] vanishing point:

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ments for the arena." Their prayer is that *"in sight of the sea promise shall be made to us of new works: of strong and very beautiful works, which are all strength and will and which are all beauty—great seditious works, great licentious works, open to every audacity of man, and which will recreate for us the desire to live the part of man, in his own measure, at the greatest stride of man on the stone.*

"Very great works and such, in the arena, that men will no longer know their species or their race . . ."

I must confess that I am not happy with this passage, which I have copied from Mr. Fowlie's text, which proposes to be more than a pony: a poem. As such, it only rarely manages to re-create or even to approximate the achievement of *Amers*. The extraordinary richness of internal rhyme is not even attempted—and who can blame Mr. Fowlie? The frequent etymological allusiveness is sometimes ignored or misunderstood, as when *"La Mer en fête sur ses marches"* (the last word being obviously meant in the Roman sense of confines or frontiers) disastrously becomes "The Sea, in celebration of its steps." But what is more serious, since the rhymes are probably irrecoverable and even Homer nods, is that the ample swell of Perse's rhythms, alternating between a sort of irregular epic line and a curiously toppled-over alexandrine, like waves forming and breaking, becomes crabbed and unmetrical in English.

(In passing, I should like to denounce the absurd notion, once put forward by Allen Tate in speaking of Perse's prosody, that French verse is accentless. One has only to pronounce the passage quoted above, in the original:

"Nous implorons qu'en vue de mer
il nous soit fait promesse d'œuvres
nouvelles:
d'œuvres vivaces et très belles,
qui ne soient qu'œuvre vive et ne
soient qu'œuvres belles."

The accent here is deafening, as befits the circumstance; but it is always present in Perse, and indeed, one cannot imagine what French verse Mr. Tate had in mind.)

I have cited this passage, however, not in depreciation of Mr. Fowlie's translation, which often comes off better, but in pursuit of my point about St.-John Perse. To say that this poet cries out for translation—that he seems already in his own language (and how beautifully) to be rendering some older and larger text—is to come close, I believe, to what one must call his mystery, since no one has ever explained it. *Eloges, Anabasis, Exile, Winds*—the archaeologists

have long had the fragments in hand. Men like Claudel and Gide, Ungaretti, Jorge Guillen, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Groethuysen, Zalamea, and many others have pored over them and transposed them into their various languages. And now we have *Amers*. "My last song! my last song! . . . and which will be a song of a man of the sea. . . ." Will it not provide us with some clue to those "very great works and such . . . that men will no longer know their species or their race"?

PERSE BELONGS to that new breed of cosmic Frenchmen, hymn writers, yea sayers, announced by Lautréamont and Rimbaud, by the mystic Ségalen and the Christian Claudel, who have experienced in their flesh the mortality of civilizations. "We civilizations now know that we are mortal," said Valéry, who characteristically understood this spirit without giving himself to it. To read Perse through in the collected edition (published by Gallimard a few years ago) is to be left with the vision of some solitary Survivor riding across a lunar landscape, like that Gobi Desert which Perse once explored. The cataclysm has happened, the gods are dead, the world is destroyed. The Survivor re-creates it. serene and acquiescent, out of the fantastic relatedness and richness of the human memory. He praises what is left and what was and what is to come. He praises the migrations of man, his places of exile, his way of turning his back, of retaining, even of destroying; and his "last chant," *Amers*, is in praise of his subtle, ambiguous, and finally unconquerable creativity.

Who is this Survivor? A French diplomat, career ambassador, and secretary general of the foreign ministry for many years before the war, Alexis Léger, alias St.-John Perse, was cast up on the shores of this country in 1940. Befriended by Archibald MacLeish and vaguely employed at the Library of Congress, he has lived in Washington ever since. At the moment, I learn from François Mauriac's Bloc-Notes in a recent *Express*, he is in Paris, dining with old friends and talking of politics. It is significant that Mauriac says nothing of Perse's poetry; the visitor from Washington was "Alexis Léger, who with Philippe Berthelot, Aristide Briand, and all the others [i.e., prewar foreign ministers and officials], was obliged to witness at first hand that tragedy of a hesitant and divided France . . ." But he also recalls meeting Léger at school in Bordeaux, half a century ago, and is astonished (though nothing could be less astonishing to a reader of Perse!) to hear him describe details of the Mauriac family living room:

"I [had already, in 1905] discerned that this youth, newly disembarked from his native Guadeloupe, . . . belonged to the human elite. Besides, he knew Francis Jammes, Claudel. . . The gaze he fixed on Jacques Rivière and on me in Bordeaux . . . fell later on Hitler, on Mussolini, on Stalin, on Laval, on all the other protagonists who were jointly responsible for that rapid decomposition . . ."

Four years after that first encounter with Mauriac, Léger published *Images à Crusoé*, which are not included in the Gallimard edition. In 1910, *Eloges*. In 1914, he entered the diplomatic service and, with the exception of the almost clandestine *Anabase* in 1921, there were no further publications until the period of exile in America, twenty years later. By then his first poems, which had been admired by

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Claudel, Gide, and Jammes, had gone to their curious out-of-print limbo and Perse was a sort of legend among poets. Even today there is something half-legendary and secretive about his fame.

If I dwell on this aspect of his career, it is to show that the Survivor comes legitimately by his role. Were it possible in this brief space, one would also like to dwell on Léger's colonial childhood on his father's private island of St.-Léger-les-Feuilles, in the Antilles; of the Hindu servant girl who painted him with saffron for their incarnation rites of Siva, after which he was taken to lay hands on the Hindu plantation workers and cure their ills; and then, of course, there are the travels in Europe, China, and Polynesia; and the remark with which he is said to have reassured Briand, who had heard disquieting rumors of his literary past: "A book is but the death of a tree." Léger's life, in short, might well have been invented by St.-John Perse. It was essential to his

project that the Survivor be a Prince, well trained by his father's counselors and servants to the tasks of an empire, familiar with the fabulous, the distant, the half-forgotten, with all rituals, customs, trades, classes, exercising sovereignty over all the world's words:

"And words for us they are no longer, being no longer signs or adornments,

But the thing itself which they signify and the thing itself they adorned. . ."

NOW THE POET celebrates the sea of creation which is in him and about him, and the sea and the poem become one. This is the "subject" of *Amers,* a four-part ode in a rhetoric conceived at once to render the great life-giving waters in their physical aspects and to encompass the impossible: *all* that the sea has meant and can mean to all men. So overweening an ambition lies beyond the human limits; its accomplishment can only exist in some "divine promulgation" (*"murmure et fête à hauteur d'hommes.—la Mer elle-même notre veille, comme une promulgation divine"*) which this poem—these sumptuous fragments—can only suggest. (The word *"amers,"* a typical Persean word, refers to those navigational markings—church steeples, rock formations, painted cliffs—by which seamen take their bearings in sight of land.) But this is Perse's subject, one hastens to add, only in the partial and inadequate sense in which the migratory restlessness of man is the subject of *Anabase,* or as the proud assertion of man's properties and legitimacy is the subject of *Exil.* In fact, and despite profound differences of tone and mood and a certain evolution of the rhetoric from *Eloges* to *Amers,* these are all the same poem. The same Survivor is riding across the same lunar landscape, through the same ruins, and his meditation re-creates the world, not in accordance with some preconceived scheme, a philosophy of history or an epistemology, but in the lordly way of the poet, by naming things, remembering things, and establishing relations between them. These things and their relations are the "matter" of the poem, which proceeds by immense enumerations, encyclopedic collections, catalogues (as of strange occupations, antiquities, styles, anthropological findings) all remembered or invented or related in such a way as to show the simultaneity of the Roman and the Aztec, the Tibetan and the Assyrian, the exposure of the moribund among the Mongols, the circumcision of women among certain East African tribes, the European idea of chivalry —and so on, indefinitely.

All this, of course, is not simply thrown together like bric-a-brac but organized in dramatic movements, interspersed with lyric passages like the great sensuous song of songs of *Amers,* employing all the devices of irony, humor, progression, and surprise. For example, the celebration of the western movement of the Americans (and of Perse's ancestors) is accompanied by a contrapuntal evocation of what is left behind:

"Nous en avions assez, prudence, de tes maximes à bout de fil à plomb, de ton épargne à bout d'usure et de reprise. Assez aussi de ces Hotels de Ventes et de Transylvanie, de ces marchandes d'antiquailles au coin des places à balcons d'or et ferronneries d'Abbesses. . ."

A passage like this could go on indefinitely, and in fact it does (in the sense that we say of a straight line that it is infinitely extensible into space). Similarly, the tragediennes of *Amers,* as they speak their prayer for "new works," dwell lovingly and at great length on those which they now promise to "lay down."

BUT NOTHING is ever finally laid down: this is what Perse is telling us. One thinks of Malraux and *"Les Voix du Silence,"* feverishly ransacking the universe to show that we have come at last to the age of totality and autonomy in art, when every painter knows all painting, and art relates itself to nothing more "real" and nothing more imperative than its own history. It is no accident that the Survivor's meditation plays so persistently on the notion of boundaries, limits, frontiers. But the boundaries are half-obliterated traces and the limits are exultantly transgressed: "Thus the Conqueror, under his war plume, at the last gates of the Sanctuary: 'I will live in the forbidden rooms and will stroll in them. . .'" And finally, of course, transgression ("Moving in your movement, rejoicing in the offense and the transgression, O Sea of the ineffable welcome and total Sea of delight!") is assimilated like everything else as the Survivor's meditation is lifted by the immense swell of the "plenary Sea" to encompass the re-created world:

"For your pleasure is in the mass and in divine propensity. . . The citadels dismantled at the sound of war flutes do not fill so vast a place for the resurrection of the dead!"

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CHANNELS

No News Is Bad News

MARYA MANNES

IF ANYONE still wonders why news heard and news seen is no substitute for news read, the recent New York newspaper deliverers' strike has made the reasons abundantly and painfully clear. Some are part of the nature of radio and television, some of the nature of man.

Take timing, to begin with. You can choose your moment to read the newspaper, but you cannot choose when you hear or see news. You are not only bound to certain moments or certain hours of listening or looking, but the pace of listening, the pace of absorption, is arbitrarily dictated, whereas in print you can linger, postpone, ignore, or digest at your own rhythm.

Next, take the selection of news. By headlines, subheads, and placement, a newspaper will pre-sort what it feels to be important so that the eye is presented with a preference and can quickly relegate what the mind considers trivial or irrelevant to oblivion or, at least, brief perusal. On radio and television, the fact that the news announcer may say "This is the headline news" or "Here are the top stories" does not, in effect, separate the important from the inessential, for they are given the same expression by the mere fact of consecutive utterance. And although a tenement fire in the Bronx may follow rather than precede the last Kremlin note, it takes up the same interval of time, has the same emphasis in sound. On television, in fact, it is often given far greater emphasis, for it is easier to get film footage on a Bronx fire than a picture of Khrushchev warning the West on Berlin. Thus the visual selection is arbitrary, depending more on the availability of film than on the importance of a story.

These deterrents to good and solid reporting are partly in the nature of the media themselves. But where radio and television fell down miserably in the news emergency was in the selection of news itself and in the manner of presentation, betraying in both a staggering lack of imagination and innovation. With some major exceptions, to be noted later, radio continued to believe that "stepping up" the amount of newscasts during the day provided a solution, and television stayed within the narrow grooves of its own formats, secure in its favorite fallacy that the reading of AP and UPI items pasted together in the newsrooms is, in fact, news.

Nothing could be further from the truth, as anyone knows who listened and looked in those December weeks without newspapers. News became, in fact, the ultimate boredom: another note from Moscow, another firing at Canaveral, another papal act. Who, after ten repetitions (in the same words) and no real information, cared? And how could events of significance be so boring? Because, with few exceptions, there was no mind behind them, no inflection of feeling—nothing but a voice (that bland, rote-deadened, professionally modulated voice) telling facts. For although facts are the stuff of good newspapers, an important story is written by a man who not only knows how to write but how to think, and what you read is the result of his own selectivity: in the end, a subjective act.

AND THIS IS WHY radio and television come alive in the news field only when there is an editorial underlay beneath, a statement of personal belief: when Eric Sevareid or Edward P. Morgan speaks his "tailpiece," his own distillation of the day's news; when Chet Huntley or David Brinkley or John Secondari permits irony to color his reports; when David Schoenbrun speaks of the France he loves and knows so well; when Daniel Schorr's homely voice comes through from Warsaw; when Leon Pearson tells what he thinks of a book or a play. And television news reached its best moments during the strike when the men who write for newspapers spoke what they wrote. These men and women were neither suave nor regular of feature; some had halting delivery, others trembling hands. Some even droned. But they were writers: they knew how to organize facts, how to tell a story, how to make a point. And the point they made clearest was that the people who handle news on television and radio should be able to choose the news, understand the news, and write the news.

Necessity made the networks aware of this for the first time in any significant way when they teamed up with the newspapers in the newsprint blackout: NBC-TV with the New York *Times*, CBS-TV with the *Herald Tribune* and *Times* writers (mostly on an expanded "Eye on New York"), WNEW with various columnists, and WQXR greatly enlarging its usual *Times*-sponsored coverage. The freshest parts of these broadcasts were the reviews of plays, movies, TV, and books read by the critics—Kerr and Atkinson, Crosby and Gould, Dolbier and Beckley and Watts—and the news features read by the editorial writers. If television and radio do not realize what they could do with such criticism on a regular basis, they are missing a vital area of programming and excitement. This might include a critical review of TV fare: a weekly feature that would draw a large and responsive audience.

But here we come to timing again. The NBC-TV-cum-*Times* roundup came between nine and ten on Sunday morning: a forced feeding at a time of sluggish digestion. And CBS-TV and the *Tribune* were heard weekdays between one and two—hardly an hour to catch the men and women who work, the professionals most dependent on news.

IN THE LONG RUN, the strike that caused so many losses and so much exasperated frustration may have proved a blessing in this very widening of news horizons on the electronic media. It must certainly have helped to confirm a very healthy trend in the country at

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large: editorializing on the air. Already forty per cent of the stations have adopted this policy, and more are committing themselves to the expression of ideas and opinions.

What one could hope for beyond this is an overhauling of the whole concept of spot news and news announcing, beginning with the abolition of that faceless, mindless word jockey, the radio newscaster. No news can be significant or interesting when it is read every day or every hour of every day by the same voice by a man who has no part in gathering it, writing it, or feeling it.

One would hope to see less emphasis on purely political news and more regional on-the-spot reporting, more criticism, more portraiture, more comment, and above all, more humor. The world may be desperate, but it need not always be solemn. All this would mean far less dependence on news agencies and syndicates and far more dependence on the local reporter, for a great part of the deadliness of radio spot news and some television news is the hasty assembling of ticker tape—a stale, thin diet.

Less economical? More trouble? Probably. Custom work always costs more than mass production. The stencil is the easy way out. A dead end, too. «»

MOVIES

On the Road to Benares

GERALD WEALES

THE STORY of the making of *Pather Panchali,* a film about the attempts of one Brahman village family to keep alive, has been told so often that it has become one of the fairy tales of moviemaking. Satyajit Ray, a commercial artist turned director and scenarist, talked about his script hopefully to possible angels, shot footage at his own expense, finally got backing from the government of West Bengal—an allowance that came in installments which forced the film to be made in sections, often months apart. After the hearthside ashes, the Prince's ball. The film slowly gained an international critical reputation, won prizes for itself at Cannes and San Francisco, opened triumphantly in New York City. At this point, the fairy tale should end happily, but reality is less tidy than storytelling. The end of the tale—at least of the American version—is still waiting to be told. *Pather Panchali* has recently been released in cities across the country. The reactions of audiences in those cities (the film played only two weeks in Philadelphia) will write the real finish to the story of the making of the movie. It will also affect the showing of the next two parts of what is actually a film trilogy—*Aparajito* and *The World of Apu,* now nearing completion in India.)

THOUGH part of a triad, *Pather Panchali* is complete in itself. The later films will deal with the family after they have moved on to Benares, out into the larger world. *Pather Panchali* places the family in its Bengal village. The father is an amiable, indulgent intellectual who dreams always of an easy success through his writing. The mother is the practical woman whose strength must hold the family together, whose ingenuity must make the most of bare subsistence. The irony of the situation is that it is the mother who must become querulous and difficult, needling the father, shouting and whining at the children, abusing the old aunt who lives with them. For the mother, whose pride is one of the formative elements in the action of the film, her house and its walled court become a retreat in which she tries to sever the family from the village. She has been forced into such withdrawal by the sharp-tongued Mrs. Mookerji, the big landowner, whose accusations against her daughter (for stealing fruit, for stealing a necklace) bring shame on the whole family, a shame that is fed by her inability to admit the extent of their poverty. In the course of the film, she learns—as the children, the husband, and the old aunt know—that the house must open into the village, the village into the house. Not only the irate Mrs. Mookerji but the kindly neighbor who brings rice when the family starves, the doctor who tries to save the dying daughter, the elders who do not want the family to leave for the city—all come into the court, tying the family to the village. The ties are only unloosed at the end of the movie when the family sets out for Benares, for now the family is to become part of a larger unit—of a city, finally of India. They—like the itinerant candy seller, the acting troupe, the hawker with peep-show views of the Taj Mahal—become one of the links that lead from the village out into the world (the battered, bearded brass band that is on hand for a village wedding plays haltingly "It's a Long Way to Tipperary").

The relation of the individual family to its village is implicit throughout the film, but Satyajit Ray's immediate preoccupation is with the members of the family and their dependence on and difficulties with one another. In a film in which the family faces the real danger of starvation, in which two deaths must be suffered and accepted, Ray finds time also to celebrate the simpler pleasures and annoyances of family life—the old aunt telling ghost stories to the children, the wife's petulance with the husband's smoking (which is really anger at the way they live), the little boy's preparations for school. Occasionally a scene is presented for its own sake, but almost always it reaches back to earlier scenes and forward to later ones to make some kind of continuing statement about one of the characters. The preparations for school, for instance, are presented twice: once in a cheerful family shot; later—after the death of the sister—through the boy alone. Ray's statements are always simple, but—rather like those of Thornton Wilder on the stage—they almost always imply much more than they seem to say.

A description of a single sequence, the longest and best in the film,

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can most easily show the way in which Ray works. Following the appearance of the theatrical troupe in the village, the little boy rifles his sister's box of treasures and takes her silver leaf to make a crown so that he can play at king and villain. She catches him and beats him angrily, feels guilty as she does so, feels even angrier at herself for the guilt and, sticking out her tongue, races off, knowing that he will follow her. Her first intention apparently is to lose him to teach him a lesson (there are fine shots of the boy, determined, worried, hurt, wandering through grass taller than he is), but as she runs, she loses both anger and guilt and leads him finally to the railroad track in time to see a train pass, something which he has never seen before and which, an earlier scene tells us, he has longed to do. If the sequence did no more than what I have attempted to describe, it would have told with taste and understanding a great amount about the workings of the minds of children. But the run of the two children is intercut with the last quarrel of the mother and the old aunt, who the mother feels is responsible for the girl's stealing; and the old lady, after a pathetic attempt to ingratiate herself with her sulky niece, goes away to die. The implacability of an adult quarrel becomes horrifyingly contrasted with the transience of a child's anger. The sequence ends, properly, when the two children, now happily together, discover the aunt in the woods.

The film has minor imperfections, as what movie does not. Apparently shot almost completely in natural lighting, there are scenes that are more murky than lyrically suggestive. Occasionally, the valid observations of the camera look rather like clichés—the feeding of the kittens at the opening, for instance. Ray's fondness for lingering close-ups (the late Chunibala Devi, who played the old aunt, had one of the most magnificent faces I have seen anywhere) sometimes let him keep his camera on a face long after the close-up had said all that it could say. These blemishes, however, are relatively unimportant in a film that speaks so directly and so movingly of human pain and human joy and, most important, of human dignity.

BOOKS

The Historian at the Center

ALFRED KAZIN

THE AGE OF ROOSEVELT, VOL. II: THE COMING OF THE NEW DEAL, by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. *Houghton Mifflin. $6.75.*

Some years ago, during the Truman era, when Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., began thinking of *The Age of Roosevelt,* he understandably felt that it was a bad time to be writing about Roosevelt. Whatever Truman's endearing personal qualities, his administration certainly did not add to the reputation of the New Deal; and Truman's weaknesses as the heir of the Roosevelt administration so quickly made him the sacrificial goat when the Republicans in the McCarthy period came up with their retrospectively long knives that Schlesinger must have felt that he was writing dead against the spirit of the times. Moreover, Eisenhower, at least in those now far-off first months when he seemed to be coherent and occasionally even sage, offered up so powerful a glamour in opposition to F.D.R.'s that it intensified the disenchantment with Roosevelt that had set in with Stalin's obvious exploitation of Allied victory.

But a work of history takes so long to produce that it sometimes sees changes—either in the public taste or in the historian himself—that make for an ironic reversal of expectations. The Truman era may have been a bad time to begin *The Age of Roosevelt,* but the last years of Eisenhower's have certainly made it a good time for publishing one. By 1957, when Schlesinger published his first volume, *The Crisis of the Old Order,* it was impossible not to see parallels on every hand between the obstinacy of Hoover and the obtuseness of Eisenhower.

No wonder Schlesinger's account of how the first New Deal emerged has proved so unexpectedly rousing. Not only was the depression the most significant social experience of the generation now increasingly in the ascendancy; it so colored its experience of the war that anyone who came of age in the 1930's recognized not only that war is politics carried on by other means but that the war was in some sense an extension of the depression. Everything since 1933 has taken place outside the domain of the "normal," the traditionally hopeful American experience. The increasing weakness of middle-class standards and traditions; of the faith in progress and of the habitual insistence on freedom; the increasing frivolity of popular culture; the political nihilism and cynicism of which McCarthy was the largest postwar symbol—all this had its beginnings in the bitterness of the depression and the intellectual bankruptcy of business leadership. It is the great merit of Schlesinger's history that he describes the breakdown of public order, then the first excitement of the New Deal and the hoped-for revival of the national faith, with complete emotional authenticity.

THIS IS BECAUSE Schlesinger really believes in the New Deal as a tradition, a political idea, a historical legacy. He believes that it was one of the great expressions in our time of historical intelligence and moderation, that it symbolizes the vitality still possible at the center. Schlesinger believes in the New Deal even more than do most of the New Dealers, for whom it represented a whole series of inconclusive compromises. He is sure that as a philosophy the New Deal has coherence and that as a national tradition it has distinct shape. This, while historically debatable, is so deeply felt a conviction that he includes among the dramatis personae of the New Deal the ancestral figures of many American social philosophers with whom Roosevelt had no intellectual connection.

Schlesinger has conviction, and what among so many historians is

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merely a liberal prejudice is for Schlesinger a way of separating all sheep from all goats. Very few American historians have a real point of view. The amorphous liberalism of so many intellectuals works with particularly numbing force on historians who are so full of American history (i.e., *modern* history) that they are too much a part of what they are writing about to describe it with required force and edge and interest. American historians are deficient in ideas. Whether their lack of perspective is due to their lack of general historical interests or whether it is the other way around, they need a gimmick, a tool, a formula. (No wonder that the conservative and Catholic de Tocqueville is always invoked by American historians; he knew what he thought.) But the gospels are all contradictory—de Tocqueville, Turner, Beard, Marx, Freud—and now Riesman. Schlesinger, whose ease embodies some characteristic glibnesses of the present historical guild, certainly has a point of view. It was this, in a period when few historians will try a "big" book, in the grand style, that led him to attempt the whole age of Roosevelt. One reason for this is his evident wish to re-create, as an intellectual tradition, the New Deal for the Democratic Party. But even more, Schlesinger's book represents an interest in history as seen from the top, from the inside, among the policymakers—and it is this, actually, that gives the book its old-fashioned *literary* interest, for the great nineteenth-century historians also wrote as if they were operating from the center of things.

SCHLESINGER'S notable sense of literary organization and drama, his ability to describe the Washington scene and the New Dealers as episodes in an historical drama—these have distinct literary overtones (there is even a reminiscence of John Dos Passos's style in the early portrait of Hoover's childhood) and literary value. Because Schlesinger writes as a partisan, with enormous confidence in his cause, he lacks the literary freedom of a Van Wyck Brooks or Edmund Wilson; but he is also free from the mawkish and desperate psychologizing of the academic historian who

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feels that he writes from the outside, far from the centers of power. Schlesinger's history embodies the admiration of an American intellectual, who feels himself part of a new elite outside the business ethos, for the one great recent American leader who was also outside it. Radicals are usually interested in ideology, not politics; liberals tend to see themselves as sympathizers, not leaders. Schlesinger has reversed this pattern among American historians, just as he believes that F.D.R. reversed it in government.

It was Roosevelt the "country squire," who was patrician in tradition and in fact undistinguished at both law and business, who became the idol of all those people in this country—minorities, labor, Southern peons and Southern aristocrats, intellectuals—who also felt themselves outside the business community as an activity and a tradition. In particular, Roosevelt gave new sanction to those academic intellectuals and theorists who, until the New Deal came along, had always been baffled by their inability to make use of, even to test, their explicit analysis of modern society. The more the businessmen hated Roosevelt because, as they correctly thought, he despised business as a way of life, the more the intellectuals and academicians clung to him. They had all been thrown together by their common exclusion from "normal," commercial, American experience. The Roosevelt haters were wrong when they charged that Roosevelt hated business because he had failed in it. Schlesinger quotes a remarkable letter Roosevelt once sent to a Harvard dean: he really thought business "absurd." It was this freedom from the most powerful tendency in American life that gave Roosevelt his inner freedom; it is this, surely, that gave him his sense of the dramatic, of the "forward" movement in American life at a time when the old order, in Schlesinger's phrase, was not merely in crisis but had actually collapsed.

Schlesinger's first volume, *The Crisis of the Old Order,* though highly partisan and sometimes downright unfair in its black-and-white scheme of values, was exciting because it represented the actual drama in the passing of the old order. *The Coming of the New Deal* is far more technical in its detail and minutely carries the history of the administration up to the 1934 elections. It is not merely his sense of historical responsibility, it is his New Deal mystique, as it were, that has made Schlesinger in this volume stick so closely to the inner history of the new reform agencies—the AAA, the NRA, the PWA, and all the rest. Yet the image of Roosevelt is always in the reader's mind, obviously because it is in the author's. The book concludes with a character study of Roosevelt in office that is an extension of the biography of Roosevelt with which the first volume ended; I suspect that future volumes in *The Age of Roosevelt* are likely to close on this same magnetic human image. The administrative point of view, I have suggested, is a brilliant literary and dramatic device that gives the reader the old-fashioned sense of commanding history as a drama and a spectacle. The conflict of administrators, the sensitivities of Henry Wallace, the prickliness of Harold Ickes—all these become problems of policy, as they must have been to Roosevelt; and like Roosevelt, we feel ourselves to be patient, sage, endlessly resourceful. The trouble with this is that while it gives us a sense of being at the center and almost in command of things, it tempts Schlesinger into sacrificing the truth that cannot be fitted in, the jagged edges that would detract from the straight frame and the smooth design. From the center of the administrative web, all things appear in relation to itself. The historian in this position, like the President, gets a sense of the whole that is exciting, but some things look flatter to him than they need to; he must cover too much in a hurry; he cannot help being a little condescending and mechanical. Just as Roosevelt said "my old friend" too easily, so Schlesinger is a little offhand in describing a New Deal politician as "irresistible and penetrating."

More serious is the intellectual unctuousness that comes from thinking inside the position of power. It is true, as Schlesinger says in his moving portrait of Roosevelt, that "the American system remained essentially a presidential system; in the end, all things came to the man in the White House." But the White House is more likely to hear of things than it is to initiate or even to understand them, and here Roosevelt's famous "pragmatism," his lack of ideas, has turned out to be far more sterile and even dangerous than Schlesinger's account of Roosevelt in his favorite image of himself—the "quarterback," the shifting center of operations—suggests. Roosevelt's freedom from the business ethos was an accident of birth and historical moment, not a matter of personal philosophy. When one recognizes the intellectual poverty and spiritual thinness with which he defended democracy during the war—has there ever been so notable an American leader whose public papers are so insignificant as political literature?—and remembers how Wilson, by contrast, always had historic reasons for what he did and recognized the historical tragedy of what he was forced to do, one sees the tragedy of a diminishing democratic leadership that Schlesinger, who sees F.D.R. always in winning human terms, does not bother with. Wilson, demonstrably a failure in his own terms, a "foolish" and obstinate idealist, nevertheless left behind him concepts that the Democratic Party could think about. The use of a political philosophy, after all, is that it be carried on. Roosevelt's pragmatism, which his enemies thought opportunism and which in Schlesinger's book becomes an exciting democratic vitalism and pluralism, was in fact conducted so far beyond the limits of "normal" politics that it signified neither the bankruptcy that his enemies saw nor the inspired common sense that Schlesinger sees. It represented the extreme of administrative maneuvering, Roosevelt's only knowledge, in a world in which—as with Stalin at Yalta—gestures and smiles and personal charm deceived the actor far more than they did his audience. It had been Roosevelt's great good luck that he was socially an anachronism, but by the end of the war he was really one politically: only his growing inaccessibility inside the web permitted him not to realize that stratagems had replaced principles.

The New Deal did not destroy

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the old order. Like all modern revolutions, it came in after the old order had collapsed. It operated, as all governments must operate nowadays, under the shadow of extremes, in a world of improvised solutions. But Roosevelt could not know how much he had gone beyond the traditional morality, the clear sense of good and evil, that at least left Woodrow Wilson historically lucid. It is this failure to show the growing uncontrol within and behind the New Deal, the hidden dimension of moral extremism, that I object to in Schlesinger's new book. He writes as if, by recounting on so minute a scale the first year of the New Deal, he were reporting from some irrefutable center the established truth. Actually, it has become increasingly clear that the New Deal represented, against the will and sometimes without the knowledge of many people who participated in it, a series of adventures in a void that was created by the decay of tradition.

WHEN Roosevelt was asked once for his philosophy, he replied testily: "I am a Christian and a Democrat." This was the legacy passed on to him, and was purely personal; it was not one he could hand on to his successors. And in fact, he has no disciples, only admirers. Since, in Schlesinger's total argument, the New Deal represents a philosophy of moderation, a middle way between *laissez faire* and the Communist specter, I think that one clear intention of his book—to create a canon, to show the New Deal as a viable tradition—is an illusion. What makes his volumes so notable is really their literary sense, their dramatic organization, their feeling for the personalities of administrators who were swept up by the times as by a tidal wave. It is in such pages that Schlesinger shows his awareness of the plight of democracy, of the increasing pressure of mass society on the eighteenth-century machinery of American government. Schlesinger's book, which becomes thin in its complacent New Deal references, is actually exciting and moving whenever, in seeking to render our times, it hints of the permanent crisis that is the truth of our times.

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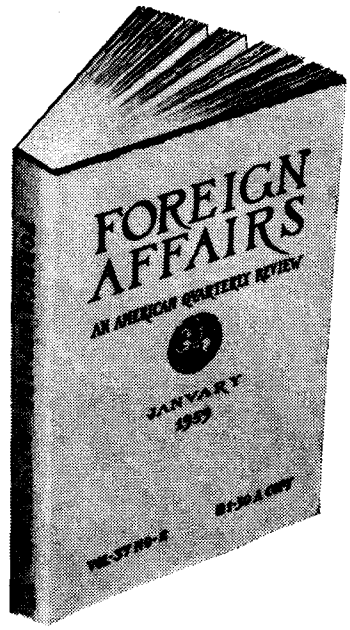

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Novels: Style and Substance

NORMAN PODHORETZ

THE PISTOL, by James Jones. *Scribner. $3.*

THE POORHOUSE FAIR, by John Updike. *Knopf. $3.50.*

LADY L., by Romain Gary. *Simon and Schuster. $3.50.*

James Jones's third novel, *The Pistol,* is hardly up to the standard he set for himself in *From Here to Eternity,* but it does mark an improvement over his recent *Some Came Running,* and it represents a salutary effort by Jones to try his hand at something new. The hero of *The Pistol* is Pfc. Richard Mast, a young career soldier stationed in Hawaii at the time of Pearl Harbor who, in the confusions of the first Japanese attack, is left with a pistol that had only been issued to him for a twenty-four-hour stint of guard duty. Mast is obsessed with a need to hold onto the pistol, but his obsession is scarcely more powerful than the yearning of almost every man in his platoon to get possession of it for himself. Jones never quite manages to persuade us that a mere pistol could have aroused such passionate feeling in so many men, and the explanation he gives—that it guarantees an additional margin of safety in the war—simply does not seem adequate. Nor is the credibility of the story reinforced by our discovery that all these men entertain exactly the same fantasy which haunts Mast (the fear of being hacked to death by a samurai saber) and which is supposed to account for the importance he attaches to the pistol.

But for all the care Jones takes to establish dramatic plausibility, *The Pistol* is not a realistic novel. It is a kind of fairy tale (complete with the appropriate Freudian symbols) in which Mast plays the role of the Younger Son who learns the ways of the world and finally achieves manhood by protecting the magic weapon that has miraculously been given into his keeping. Jones even follows an episodic scheme reminiscent of the fairy tale: each chapter describes a different attempt to deprive Mast of the pistol, and each attempt illustrates the workings of one of the various principles against which the Younger Son must learn to defend himself if he is to become a man: Money, Theft, Cajolery, Force, Cunning, and so on. If this were a traditional fairy tale it would probably end with the hero's victory, but the point Jones wants to make is precisely that no such victory is possible under modern conditions. Mast's determination is proof against Money, Force, and Theft, but he is utterly helpless in the face of Authority (Jones himself capitalizes the word), and this means that his brief moment of manhood—with all the painful responsibilities and anxieties it entails—is certain to be snatched away from him in the end.

Like so many American novelists in the naturalist tradition—like Norris, like Dreiser, like Farrell—Jones is an awkward stylist. Bad writing is of course always a defect, but the long naturalistic novel, which depends on weight and mass rather than precision or delicacy, has consistently shown itself capable of dispensing quite happily with good prose; indeed, one is almost inclined to believe that crudity of style is a necessary element in the primitive sense of helplessness before the merciless forces ruling the universe that characteristically informs naturalistic fiction. Style, however, is of the essence in a short symbolic novel like *The Pistol,* so that Jones's difficulty in handling the English language very nearly wrecks the whole book. He has tried for the simplicity and directness that he rightly assumed to be suitable to the telling of a legend—with what scant success a short quotation will indicate: 'When you take away a man's chance of being saved, Mast asked himself over and over as the little movie of the Jap major splitting him in twain like a melon returned to plague him day after day, when you do that to a man, what is there left?"

But if a failure of style prevents *The Pistol* from reaching the level of concentrated poetic power toward which it strains, it does not altogether destroy the force of Jones's conception. Around the central symbol of his story, Jones has succeeded—and succeeded admirably—in focusing with great sharpness and clarity his unique knowledge of what life is like on the bottom of the heap: the atmosphere of superstition that all his characters inhabit, their agonizing inarticulateness, their anxiety over manhood, and their crippling dependence on authority. It was this knowledge that gave such distinction to *From Here to Eternity;* and it is this knowledge—abandoned temporarily in *Some Came Running*—that redeems *The Pistol* and makes it a moving work in its own right.

THE OPPOSITE DEFECT of style—excessive Mandarin elegance—plagues *The Poorhouse Fair,* a first novel by John Updike, the talented young writer whose sketches and poems in the *New Yorker* have attracted a good deal of attention in the past few years. *The Poorhouse Fair* is a curious little book about a group of very old people living in a poorhouse in central New Jersey who stage a demonstration against the new prefect on the day of their annual bazaar. Conner, the prefect, is well-intentioned, efficient, and dedicated to his job, but all his efforts to improve conditions in the poorhouse have only resulted in heightening the resentment of his charges against him. The reason, we quickly discover, is that Conner really cares nothing for the feelings of these old people; he is a benevolent despot who arrogantly assumes (after the fashion of the "enlightened" bureaucratic social worker with visions of a utopian future ruled according to the best scientific principles) that he knows what they want better than they do themselves. Mr. Updike cannot be charged with taking an oversimplified view of this situation—he makes it quite clear that in some cases Conner *does* know better—but his sympathies are decidedly with the inmates. They stand for a vanishing America, a world of patchwork quilts, honest craftsmanship, interesting old houses, and salty individualism, and this seems to Mr. Updike a more innocent and more human world than the brave new one that Conner rep-

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resents. We are meant to understand, then, that the difficulties between Conner and the inmates have portentous historical and political implications: the poorhouse is Mr. Updike's image of the American present caught uneasily between the values of a dying past and the menacing ideas of a dimly apprehended future. The trouble is that Mr. Updike devotes all his energy to building this picture up and never gets around to setting the two conflicting forces into motion. No real confrontation between Conner and the inmates ever takes place, and therefore no comment of any value is permitted to emerge from their opposition.

But the absence of genuine conflict in the novel is, in my opinion, only a symptom of Mr. Updike's reluctance to admit that the issues he has raised—and they are important issues—pose any serious problems, or rather any problems that cannot be mediated by good will and mutual understanding. The very structure of *The Poorhouse Fair*—which is composed of a series of discontinuous little vignettes stitched together in an irregular pattern, like one of those old patchwork quilts Mr. Updike admires so much—gives the game away. Life, he appears to be saying, is a scrap of this and a scrap of that, and no single scrap is vivid enough to blot out the colors of the rest—hardly, one would think, a perspective from which it would be possible to get exercised over the threat posed by the likes of Conner to the values Mr. Updike has apparently been trying to defend. But that is precisely the point: the last thing Mr. Updike wants anyone to do is to get exercised over anything, and this may be the deepest reason for the utter failure of *The Poorhouse Fair* to engage our interest. Mr. Updike is a very young writer of considerable virtuosity and flair—the montage effect of his concluding chapter is a particularly dazzling display of technical ingenuity—but if he is ever to become a good novelist he will have to give up his easy Olympian superiority and take the risk of defining his stand. Such a step would undoubtedly ruffle the phenomenal composure of his prose style, but it might also provide him with the means of perceiving the

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process by which life sews the patchwork quilt, at the contemplation of whose elegant patterns he is in so great a hurry to arrive.

IF JOHN UPDIKE'S BOOK is all "poetry," Romain Gary's new novel, *Lady L.*, is all "story." The same theme that Gary explored so brilliantly in *The Roots of Heaven* is treated here at a much lower level of intensity and intellectual pressure. Lady L. is the last of the European *grandes dames*, the head of a family that includes dukes, cabinet ministers, bishops, and directors of the Bank of England, and she is also a woman whose charm, beauty, and grace have been the admiration of the world for fifty years. On her eightieth birthday she decides finally to reveal the secrets of her past to her oldest admirer, the stuffy Poet Laureate, Sir Percy Rodiner, who at first refuses to believe that his precious Diana was born in the slums of Paris and had been a prostitute and a thief before marrying into the British aristocracy. Gary pulls all the stops out, taking us first into the colorful Parisian underworld of the late nineteenth century and then tracing the process by which the pretty young prostitute is trained to pass as a great lady by an anarchist group who need her help in staging robberies for the sake of the movement. It is through the character of Armand, the impassioned and handsome anarchist leader with whom the young prostitute falls in love, that Gary brings in his favorite theme—that thirst for the absolute and contempt for the "merely" human he calls idealism. In *The Roots of Heaven*—certainly among the best novels of the past decade—Gary did marvels with this theme in the framework of an African adventure story, but in *Lady L.* he treats it with a Gallic flippancy that contributes to the amusement of the book but ends by robbing it of weight or significance. Only two points of view are introduced into *Lady L.*—the woman's, which consists of the belief that *l'amour* is the great thing in life, and the abstract love of humanity that Armand expresses. This rather stale opposition lacks the subtlety to generate any of the intellectual surprises that exploded on every page of *The Roots of Heaven*, and indeed the worst thing about *Lady L.* is its predictability. All the main characters are stereotypes (the clever Frenchwoman, the priggish Englishman, the naïve idealist, the cynical aristocrat), while the story itself is of a kind not far beyond the powers of a Daphne du Maurier. The author of *The Roots of Heaven* has earned his moment of relaxation, but one would like to see him operating again on a more ambitious scale for he is one of the very few novelists around these days who combine a first-rate mind with an easy mastery of all the tricks of the storyteller's trade.

Who Reads Poetry?

STEVEN MARCUS

THE CHEQUER'D SHADE, by John Press. *Oxford. $5.75.*

Anyone who ever reads poetry with a more than common interest finds that much of it seems, even after persistent efforts from the reader, to resist sense—that it is in fact obscure. Confronted with this obscurity, some readers suffer something that resembles a personal affront and denounce poetry as a practical joke. Others, overawed by what they cannot understand, take delight in what is beyond them. Still others work hard at it for a while and then give up in quiet despair, determined that their children will get a better education than they did. Whatever the case, the fact remains that poetry, especially modern poetry, is very hard, and few readers know what to make of it.

The Chequer'd Shade, by John Press, is addressed to the problems created by this fact. Mr. Press begins by arguing that a good deal of the great poetry of the past is fully as obscure as anything written today, and produces passages from Shakespeare and other English "classics" to demonstrate that complexity and compression are constants of poetic discourse. He soon comes to his real purpose, however, which is to elucidate the nature of the obscurity that characterizes modern poetry and to try to explain why, in the last hundred and fifty years, poetry has become increasingly opaque.

The chapters of Mr. Press's book each take up a different aspect of the problem. One, devoted to the difficulties of vocabulary and syntax, shows how good poetry is the advance guard of the language, always disturbing and enlarging the conventional language of speech. Others are about the sheer difficulty of thought, the complexity of ideas, in poetry; about the problem of reference, the fact that poetry is so frequently topical and allusive and that special knowledge is necessary to understand most of it; about the prejudices and preconceptions of readers who expect too much too soon when they read; about the caprice and willfulness of poets who create the worst kind of obscurity—that which has no content; about the forced retreat that poets have beaten into private countries of their own—into madness, coteries, personal mythologies, like those that Blake and Yeats devised for themselves—showing how the reader's isolation from the meaning of the poetry is a reflection of the poet's sense of his own isolation from society and his superfluousness in the modern world. All in all he covers the ground rather thoroughly, and *The Chequer'd Shade* is a compendium both of some of the most peculiar and obscure passages of poetry ever written and of the opinions of poets themselves on this subject.

MR. PRESS is a partisan of poetry, and he writes charmingly and sympathetically, with tact and good humor, about a demanding matter. He is not, however, an original or first-rate critic, nor does he pretend to be; he does journeyman's work in a competent and admirable way. And this brings up the most interesting question about Mr. Press's book. For whom was it written? What audience does it assume to exist?

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It is not, I think, intended for other critics, as most criticism of poetry is today. Nor is it intended for the other professional readers of poetry, for teachers or poets. Mr. Press repeats again and again what we all know, "that the appreciation of poetry at the present time is even feebler than it was a hundred years ago," and that "the hold of poetry upon the interest and affection of the intelligent common reader has undeniably slackened in the past fifty years." Nevertheless, it is clear that the book was written for an unprofessional audience, for the "intelligent common reader" who, Mr. Press assumes, both exists and is receptive to the kind of persuasion that his book intends.

That Mr. Press should be able to assume this is a fact of considerable interest. He does so for two related reasons. First, there is the undeniable fact that today "T. S. Eliot is universally accepted as a distinguished poet." Up until the mid-1930's Eliot, and everything he represented in poetry, was still being vilified and ridiculed. Today, however, he is an established success, financially as well as culturally, and few think of raising their voices in disparagement of the difficulty of his verse, even and especially those who have never read it. Last year, for example, his reading of his poetry at Columbia University was the most august and solemn occasion of the academic year. In connection with it there arose a difficulty about the distribution of seats—feelings were ruffled and statuses were mistreated, and I even heard that one academic mother gave up her ticket to her ten-year-old son so that when he grew up he could say that he had seen the great poet—shades of Tennyson and Browning! And yet only twenty years ago, the textbook of *modern* poetry used by Columbia freshmen did not contain a single poem by Eliot. Today, Eliot's poetry, as well as poetry selected from all the better-known modern poets, is in every college anthology.

THIS BRINGS US to the second reason for Mr. Press's assumption of an intelligent common reader. During the last thirty years a revolution in the teaching of poetry and English literature has taken place in both England and America. Its historic moment was the publication in 1929 of I. A. Richards's *Practical Criticism*, in which Richards demonstrated that undergraduates at Cambridge who were specializing in English were not able to read even the simplest kind of verse. After Richards's pioneering work there arose a group of academic teacher-critics (the best and most influential being F. R. Leavis) who, in both their teaching and writing, literally changed the conception of English studies. In America a similar development occurred. The New Critics, almost all of whom were academics, transformed the idea of both poetry and the teaching of poetry in American colleges. Our own historic moment in this regard is 1938, which marked the publication of Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren's *Understanding Poetry*, perhaps the most famous and important textbook in America since *McGuffey's Readers*. In print since its publication, this book has sold well over 150,000 new copies, and, as every college instructor of English can testify, each year brings forth five or ten new freshman texts that are simply variations of the Brooks and Warren original. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that a generation of students, at least those who attend our middling and better institutions, have been taught the new way of reading poetry, the way which emphasizes that obscurity, complexity, ambiguity, and paradox—all the distinguishing characteristics of modern poetry—are of the essence of all good poetry.

TODAY, freshmen confronted with a sonnet of Shakespeare's—say, "When to the Sessions of sweet silent thought"—are made to spend an hour in class discussing its fourteen lines, learning how its particular metaphor of a debtor's court informs and controls the movement of the poem, and how to follow and work out the intricacies of thought, syntax, and imagery in it. They are taught that the three parts of Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress" form something like a syllogism. They spend several hours reading and discussing Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," and follow their instructor through all

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the allusions, ironies, understatements, and opacities of the text. They are very likely taught to read poetry more carefully and sympathetically than any group of students ever has been.

It cannot go without notice, of course, that this kind of rigorous, close analysis of poetry produces moments of comic absurdity. Every teacher of English has his repertoire of howlers. I once set a class of freshmen to write on a poem by Gerard Manley Hopkins, about a little girl sadly contemplating the coming of autumn, which begins with the lines "Margaret are you grieving/ Over Goldengrove unleaving." I was utterly abashed to find one of the papers begin by declaring that "Margaret is mourning over the loss or departure of her lover, Goldengrove." In his book, Mr. Press tells an amusing story about a class in Makerere College, Uganda, in which Thomas Gray's ode "On a Favourite Cat, Drowned in a Tub of Gold Fishes" is being taught, and in which the instructor suddenly realizes that none of his students has the foggiest notion of what a goldfish is. And many an American instructor of English, including myself, has had to learn the hard way that one of the most important things to teach about Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale" is that there are no nightingales in America.

AND YET for all this progressive revolution in the teaching of poetry, it is, I think, patently clear that almost no one who is not professionally involved with it reads poetry, not even modern poetry. Students may be taught to *understand* poetry, but they don't go on reading it. The sales of volumes of poetry become steadily smaller. The average sale of a new volume of poetry in America is now five hundred copies, which means that the better libraries and the poet's family and friends have bought copies. If one goes into the homes of acquaintances who are not connected with literature in any special way, the books of poetry one is likely to find there —outside of Shakespeare and a college text or two, and perhaps, if they are particularly alert and ambitious people, Eliot's *Collected Poems*— are very few indeed, although there will be any number of good novels and books about general and even philosophic matters.

Mr. Press may well be addressing an audience that is not there, or at least is not there yet. In doing so he is doing, I think, what we all do: overestimating the power of education. Most of us, especially in America, believe that education can do almost anything—we even believe we can beat the Russians if we improve our schools. To believe that education can actually change things, can change character, society, politics, life itself, is an appealing and democratic idea. But it is not entirely true. Education cannot in the long run resist the overwhelming weight and power of society and of the culture that it so largely creates. This is especially true in our time, when the traditional values of poetry are so clearly antithetic to the values of society and its popular and middle-class culture. For poetry is not a democratic art or discipline; it is difficult and demanding; it arrogates a special function to itself, and a special status to the poet and to his audience. It believes, as it must believe, that it is the most superior and vital form of human discourse. It believes that a genuine taste for poetry must be a *cultivated*, not merely an educated, one. Ultimately, to be sure, it is concerned with "democratic" problems, with the problems that are common to men—it is, as all literature is, about how to live. But it requires that one become uncommon to read it. And it does so not out of choice or willfulness but because it is the only way poetry can preserve itself and its tradition of high seriousness and intelligence.

We find ourselves, then, in a paradoxical situation. While the way we teach poetry is improving and is calculated to bring a fuller and more intense response to its virtues and values, the forces that oppose and defeat these values and responses—the forces that tend to make us all more alike—seem to grow steadily more momentous. Mr. Press has led us straight into this dilemma with his charming and hopeful book, and though I have felt it necessary to express doubts about his assumptions, there can be no doubt, I hope, that I would be most pleased to find him right.

RECORDS

Enter Stage Left

ROLAND GELATT

WHEN RECORD MAKERS really began to grapple with stereophonic techniques about four years ago, it soon became apparent that the new medium offered special possibilities for opera recording. Stereo records, as is well known, locate for us the direction from which sounds emanate; and though this characteristic is not appreciably pertinent to our enjoyment of a Mozart symphony, in opera it can be made to convey a fairly accurate notion of the spatial relationships among several characters in a scene and to suggest the action of a libretto.

Anyone who has seen the opera *Tosca* will recall that Tosca is first heard offstage to the left jealously calling "Mario! Mario!" while her lover quickly hides the escaped prisoner Angelotti on stage right. Stereo can transport this bit of action into our living rooms. Tosca's offstage singing will come from the left, Mario Cavaradossi's hurried, whispered instructions to Angelotti from the right. Then, as the scene proceeds, stereo lets us follow Cavaradossi as he crosses the stage, opens the door for Tosca, and escorts her to center stage. No longer need the performance suggest two great-voiced artists emitting their sonorities within the area of a telephone booth.

THE TELEPHONE-BOOTH sound was, nevertheless, so familiar and ingrained that the record industry took some time to fight shy of it. Fears were first expressed that the movement of invisible singers might prove more distracting than elucidatory. Opinion now seems to have tipped in favor of introducing action into stereo opera recordings. In many recent instances full advantage has been taken of the medium's wide imaginary stage.

Most of the "stereo action" operas on the market today have been published by London Records, a

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British company with a long roster of accomplished singers. London's engineers have been taping operas stereophonically for at least four years, and almost from the start its recording directors introduced movement to heighten the illusion of a staged representation. Even the 1955 *Marriage of Figaro* conducted by Erich Kleiber, one of the finest opera recordings of all time, is filled with many touches of stage action. In the second act, immediately after the Countess finishes *"Porgi amor,"* a stereo listener can "see" Susanna enter on stage right to the words *"E già finita"* and then hasten toward stage center to join the Countess. Later in the same act the Count knocks on the door so convincingly that you may well, at first hearing, turn automatically to one of your own doors, and Cherubino's upsetting of a table in the locked anteroom has an equally authentic quality. To these delicious effects stereo adds a general tonal enhancement of Kleiber's great reading of the score. Details of musical sound that were, to be sure, latent in the ordinary LP monophonic version of this recording have come forward with brilliant immediacy in the stereo release.

More recent stereo opera recordings for the London label enlist the talents of Flagstad, Tebaldi, Del Monaco, Siepi, and many other first-rate singers. The same company is also issuing a new stereo series of Gilbert and Sullivan recordings performed by the D'Oyly Carte troupe. *The Pirates of Penzance,* for one, is a joy. When Major-General Stanley enters from backstage right and moves to the footlights for "I Am the Very Model of a Modern Major-General," when in the "Paradox" trio the singers fan out across the breadth of the stage in order that each part may emerge with scintillant clarity, the illusion of an actual performance is undeniable and irresistible. Perhaps London Records' advocacy of stage movement is nowhere more impelling than in the recording of *Giuditta,* one of Franz Lehár's many operettas. Few of us who reside this side of the Rhine can have seen *Giuditta* in the theater, but the piece has been so thoroughly and explicitly staged in stereo sound that a vivid mental picture of its action begins to take shape as we listen to the London recording.

Too much fuss, of course, can be made over stage movement, and stereo's advantages in opera would flourish even if the singers remained rooted to one spot. Even without benefit of action effects, stereo confers a desirable illusion of depth, a sense of front-to-back perspective that gives the impression—as in the opera house—of a separation between dramatis personae on stage and instrumentalists in the pit. And such attributes as lifelike hall presence, trueness of instrumental timbres, and clarity in heavily scored passages are just as welcome in opera as they are in purely orchestral music.

The marvelously polished performance of Verdi's *Falstaff* on the Angel label is a case in point. Angel has been less adventurous than London in employing spatial devices in stereo opera recordings, and in the *Falstaff* conducted by Herbert von Karajan no attempt at all was made to simulate a stage performance. This is a pity, for there are moments in *Falstaff* that cry out for the "placement" of voices—for example, the parting phrases of Dame Quickly and Nanetta at the close of Act III, Scene 1. Nevertheless, *Falstaff* in static stereo is an overwhelming experience. The *sensibile* viola figure that murmurs away as Falstaff scrutinizes his bill at the Garter Inn is of a miraculous softness; the double-forte leap of strings in Ford's monologue following the words *"Nella lor moglie abbian fede i babbei"* electrifies with its vicious bite; the turbulent introduction to Act III is sparkling and transparent even with the entire orchestra thundering fortissimo.

Stereo opera recordings, with and without stage movement, have come also from Columbia, Epic, Mercury, and RCA Victor. Many more will be released during the course of the year. Opera utilizes stereo's advantages more thoroughly than any other kind of music; and record manufacturers are demonstrating their appreciation of this fact by filling the shelves with new stereo opera recordings.

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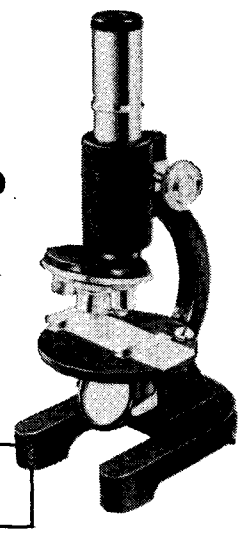

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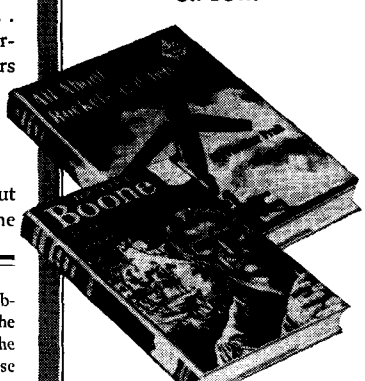

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